



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

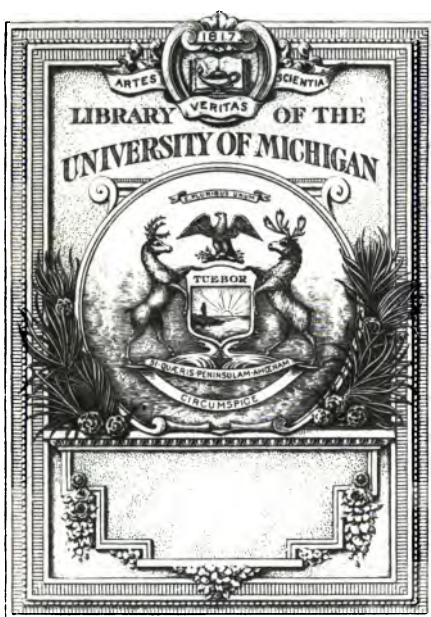
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

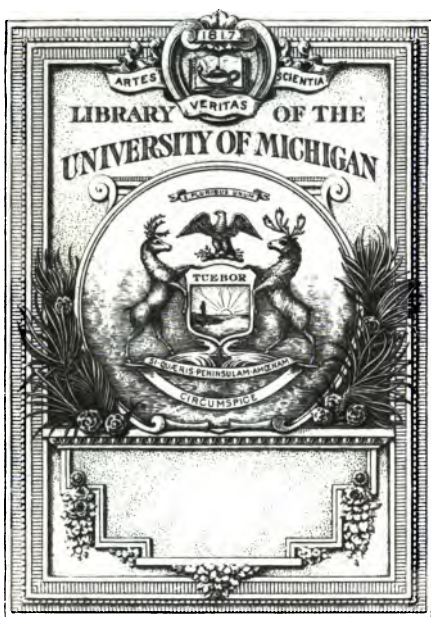
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



---

822.9

B94

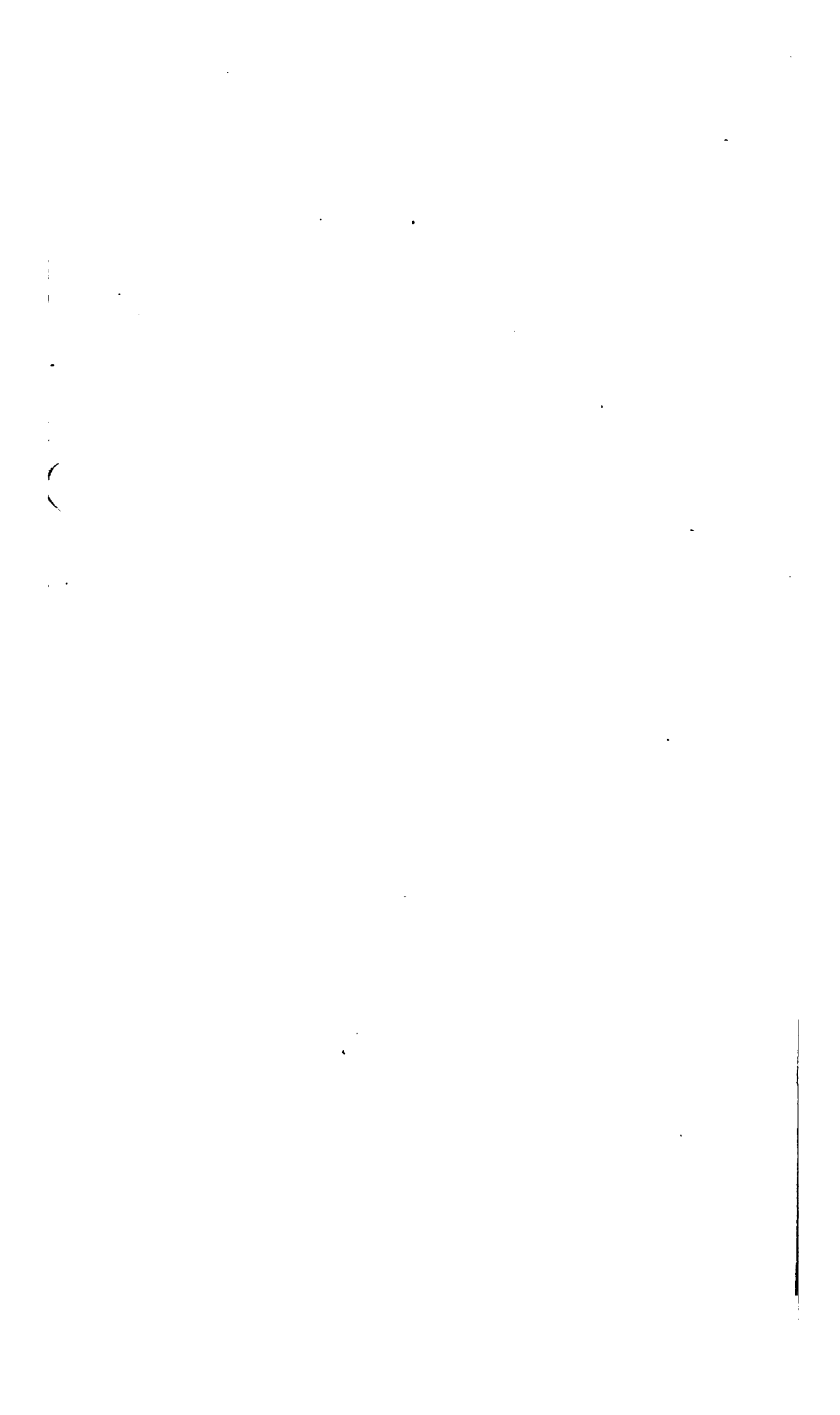


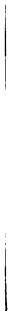


---

822.9  
B74







*The Stage*

2265

# THE STAGE:

BOTH BEFORE

AND

BEHIND THE CURTAIN,

FROM

“OBSERVATIONS TAKEN ON THE SPOT.”

BY ALFRED BUNN,

LATE LESSEE OF THE THEATRES ROYAL DRURY LANE AND  
COVENT GARDEN.

“I am (not) forbid  
To tell the secrets of my prison-house.”  
HAMLET, ACT I. SC. V.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,

Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

1840.

40

LONDON :

IBOTSON AND PALMER, PRINTERS, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.

## P R E F A C E.

---

THE postscript to a letter, as being the result of an after-thought, is generally considered the most important part of such communication—the preface to a book is looked upon in the same light. The matter contained in the pages which these remarks precede, would not have required any elucidation of this nature, otherwise so frequently necessary, had it not been for the occurrence of a series of events, during its preparation, which would at first appear almost as incredible as they are unprecedented; and which, from their rapid succession, would not only have deranged, but naturally have delayed the publication of the entire work, if alterations and emendations had taken place, as each event fell in. The deaths of some individuals referred to, and the doings of many yet alive, freely commented upon in the course of its progress, render a particular allusion to them as essential as it is becoming.

If the reader will have the kindness, and at the same time, the patience, to compare the predictions and the observations, as well as the circumstances in connection with them, detailed in these Volumes, with the result exemplified in the preface, he will, at least, be "perplexed in the extreme," to use no stronger term. It is a matter of great gratification to me to perceive the advantage of the plan upon which this production was originally undertaken, and has throughout been conducted—that of relying on facts, rather than trusting to fiction, and supporting argument by document. There is no possibility of refuting the various authorities cited which are interspersed throughout these pages, the records and letters inserted, the opinions quoted, and the judgments delivered, because the *litera scripta* can at any time be seen by all. I have not indulged in any extravagant theory arising out of an overheated imagination; but have preferred backing the calm reflection of a very long experience with the sobered opinions of sundry wiser people than myself. The many impressions opposite to mine own, with which I have had to contend, emanate from persons who, for the most part, prefer giving utterance to the speculations in which inexperience is sure to indulge, rather than listening to the arguments of more practised, and therefore more able disputants; and who stoutly maintain that interest invariably disseats judgment, and sets up prejudice in its stead. A



man interested in theatrical affairs ought to be, to my poor way of thinking, better able to argue upon the construction of them, than those in no one way connected therewith; unless, indeed, he has taken altogether to wearing the cap and bells. Without ever dreaming of being deemed more learned than the generality of my fellow creatures, I nevertheless cannot quite consent to be set down for

“ A fool whose bells have ceased to ring at all ;”

and what remnant of intelligence, therefore, is left me I have endeavoured to impart to others.

I have repeatedly been questioned, during the progress of my undertaking, as to its general nature; with the invariable conclusion, “so you are writing your life, I find.” Thousands in this world profess to “find” what yet was never “lost;” and to that class of people I have invariably and truly replied, “I am dealing with the lives of other people, rather than with my own.” It has been as erroneously imagined, that, as I professed to tell “the secrets of the prison house,” every one of my leaves would teem with scandal and libel. That any additional prejudices should be entertained against me by those who have already entertained so many, was naturally to be expected;—that was not a matter of much moment; nor was it altogether unnatural to suppose, that with abundant knowledge of the private histories of all I had to deal with, I should take an opportunity of

paying back the unblushing falsehoods, and countless calumnies, many of them have from time to time heaped upon me. But, in the first place, such a proceeding would proclaim myself to be almost as shameless as themselves; and, in the next place, it would be introducing unworthy matter, amongst what, I hope, will be found to be useful information. There will be plenty of time, should they afford me plenty of opportunity, to resort to acerbities and personalities; at present they could not further my object. At the memorable interview between His Majesty George III. and Doctor Johnson, the King, referring to the controversy between Warburton and Lowth, asked Johnson what he thought of it; the latter remarked, "Warburton has most general, Lowth most scholastic, learning; Lowth is the more correct scholar. I do not know which of them calls names best." The King was of the same opinion, and added, "You do not think then, Doctor Johnson, that there was much argument in the case;" and when Johnson said he did not think there was, the King observed, "WHEN ONCE IT COMES TO 'CALLING NAMES,' *argument is pretty well at an end!*" On so much more humble a subject than the learned disputation here alluded to, I have presumed to act upon the judgment of the good old King; and shall, therefore, undoubtedly disappoint those who, being scandalous themselves, delight in the scandal they hear against another.

I might have made a very diverting book, as far as the power thereof within me lies, had it consisted solely

of green-room *cancans*, or had it related only to the private indiscretions of public people. I might have told the whole truth to those who have only dealt in falsehood with me; but I prefer leaving them where they are—it will be time enough to take up such a traffic as that, when the dealers in it have recourse again to its practice.

The first circumstance to which I would direct particular attention, indeed the great object which I struggled so long and so hard to attain, and for the attainment of which I devoted so much time and paid so much money, has been accomplished—the abolition of the absurd restrictions, during Lent, placed upon theatres within the jurisdiction of the Lord Chamberlain. Letters not a year old, with documents and controversies of the same date, will be found in the ensuing chapters, giving a full detail of the indignation of the Ministers of the Crown at the idea of that boon being asked for, which, since I recorded it, those self-same Ministers have conceded. Mr. Duncombe, the honourable mover in the House of Commons, was, session after session, assailed for his sacrilegious attempt to disturb the sanctity of the season, or rather his desire to make the enjoyment of it general. As for the unfortunate Lessee, some idea of impaling him alive was entertained—nothing else could be thought of for such an offending varlet, who had carried his attempt at reform in this matter so far, that he had set at nought the prerogative of the Crown, and hurled defiance in the face of Her Majesty's Ministers.

“ Seeing what I have seen, seeing what I now see,” it would be a matter of some amusement to him, if the Noble Secretary for our Colonies would have the kindness to compare his Parliamentary oration of the 12th of March, 1839, with the documents I shall now have the pleasure of introducing. As the period of Lent, in this present year, 1840, was nearly at hand, Mr. Duncombe, bent upon carrying the object of his former solicitude into effect, took a course somewhat differing from his first, but in reality only preparatory to, the one he had in previous sessions adopted. He addressed the Lord Chamberlain direct, and the answer he obtained from that noble functionary, which reflects such honor on his Lordship, was so satisfactory as to render any further observation unnecessary. The letter, and the reply to it, are herewith subjoined:—

“ The Albany, Feb. 4, 1840.

“ MY LORD,

“ The numerous and respectable applications that have been made to me, in consequence of the part I took in the House of Commons during the last Session of Parliament, upon the subject of theatrical performances in Lent, will, I hope, be a sufficient apology for my troubling your Lordship upon the present occasion.

“ It is stated to me, that although it was universally understood, and agreed to last year, ‘ *That no greater restrictions ought to be placed upon theatrical entertainments during Lent within the City of West-*

*minster than are placed upon the like amusements at the same period in every other part of the Metropolis,* yet, it is apprehended, no alteration will take place. I have uniformly represented to parties expressing such fears, that I felt confident their apprehensions were unfounded.

“ Your Lordship would, however, confer a great favour upon those who originally did me the honour to place their cause in my hands, if your Lordship would, at your earliest convenience, inform me if I am correct in the conclusions to which I have come, in order that all doubts and misunderstanding upon this subject may be removed.

I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship's obedient, humble servant,

THOMAS DUNCOMBE.”

To the Earl of Uxbridge, &c.

“ Windsor Castle, Feb. 13, 1840.

“ SIR,

“ In answer to your letter, which I had the honour of receiving last week, on the subject of the Theatres being closed during Lent, I beg to inform you that I have sent letters to the managers, stating that it will only be necessary to close them during Passion-week and on Ash Wednesday.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient servant,

UXBRIDGE.”

Thomas S. Duncombe, Esq., Albany.

Now mark the monstrous incongruity too frequently committed by people possessing more means than mind, of which such a glaring instance as this has rarely occurred. No one has ever supposed that the Sovereign knows a tithe part of all that is done in the Sovereign's name; and, in this particular respect, no one *could* suppose that the gracious mistress of this fair land, with noble and expansive views upon all subjects brought under her cognizance, could, for a moment, retain one vestige of a system of bye-gone absurdities\*. No one ever dreamt that the prohibitions fulminated year after year against the dramatic performances of only some half-dozen theatres out of twenty, all within the boundaries of the metropolis, could have even been known to, much less have received the sanction of, that illustrious Lady; who, in many instances, has manifested to those by whom she has been surrounded and counselled, the vast superiority of youthful attainments over aged prejudices. That such was the fact, and that our gracious Queen would never have sanctioned a continuance of regulations, equally unwholesome and

\* As a proof how rooted has been the determination to carry out the position which I laboured so long, but in vain, to maintain, it may be mentioned that when an attempt was made, a few days prior to the last Passion Week, to prohibit a continuance of the astronomical lectures then in course of delivery at Her Majesty's Theatre, by Mr. Howell, Mr. Duncombe brought the matter before parliament, and defeated the Government opposition by 73 to 49.

contemptible, when once brought under royal consideration, may best be ascertained from the statement of another fact, *viz.* that on the very first night of Lent, when the prohibition was taken off, Her Majesty was pleased to visit Covent Garden Theatre, and to sit out the evening's entertainments. It can hardly be believed, were it not a matter of such recent occurrence, that the advisers of a Sovereign could be found to denounce the adoption of a measure, which, *on* its adoption a few months afterwards, their Sovereign set the noble example of countenancing.

Dismissing this subject, I take leave to refer to another, fully dilated upon in the course of these Volumes, in which I was then much more responsibly interested, than I am now. A mass of correspondence which passed between the Lord Chamberlain's Office and myself, upon the re-introduction of a German Opera in this country, will come under the reader's attention. It was an entertainment which, by the admirable manner in which it was sustained in Drury Lane Theatre, in the year 1833, had become extremely popular; and, in addition to the approbation of the people, had obtained the sanction and patronage of the Court. I had been desirous, season after season, of bringing it again before the public, but no favourable opportunity presented itself until the arrival in this country of the Chevalier Spontini. The musical reputation of that composer was a sufficient guarantee

for the manner in which the undertaking would be carried on ; without going over the ground a second time, the reader will perceive that I was prohibited from giving any such amusement ; but, at the very moment I am writing these remarks, I am the acting manager of the German Opera, under a licence from the Lord Chamberlain's Office, given to another ! I can, however, so far solve two such apparently contradictory problems, by stating that the prohibitions were issued against me by the Marquis Conyngham, at that time Lord Chamberlain, while their repeal was effected by the liberal policy of his Lordship's enlightened and distinguished successor, the Earl of Uxbridge. To the courteous consideration of this noble Lord the public are now indebted for the enjoyment of some of the best operas of the German school ; and by the same timely aid was Madame Vestris fortunate enough to have the power of availing herself of eleven nights in an earlier part of her season, towards the number she proposed to play, by which she has been enabled to close so much earlier, and thereby to escape the fearful odds against a patent manager, as the London season approaches its height\*.

While on the subject of " luck," let me record such an instance, in this lady's management, as none of her predecessors ever had the good fortune

\* It is impossible to withhold a smile at the nonsensical tirades which have appeared in print against the supposed premature close of



to meet with. Mr. Charles Kemble, who, theatrically speaking, was inurned in the year 1837—to whom a public dinner, all sorts of honors, and, finally, a superb piece of plate, were given on his retirement from the stage, to take upon himself the uninterrupted fulfilment of the duties devolving on “the Examiner of all theatrical entertainments,”—having effected a transfer of that office to his son, suddenly made his re-appearance on the stage he had so long adorned; not, of course, in the expectation of another dinner, any more honors, or any more plate falling into his lap, but in obedience to a wish of his gracious Sovereign, and at the same time to show her how a few characters in the drama *ought* to be acted. While some parties maintained that *he* had been “dug up,” and Macready had thereby been “buried,” others regretted that his first retirement was not his final one;—and while the *Montagues* declared that he acted finer than ever, the *Capulets* looked upon him as having gone altogether to decay. Be this as it may, I keep my own opinion to myself; being contented to record the most important part of the matter—*id est*, THE ISSUE. Mr. Kemble performed six nights, on each of which he filled most of the crevices in Covent Garden Theatre; and if his acting had no other effect, it possessed the very useful and salutary one of bringing other performers to their

Covent Garden Theatre. By virtue of these said eleven nights in Lent, and by the previous advantage of having opened in September, Madame Vestris has extended her season to the same length as many of her predecessors did, who played through the month of June.

proper level; for while *Hamlet* by Mr. Macready failed to attract much more than half a house at the Haymarket, *Hamlet* by Mr. Charles Kemble filled Covent Garden Theatre to overflowing. This is a circumstance which redounds to the honor and renown of Mr. Charles Kemble; and another is, that in a determination that his performance should be solidly useful to the lessee of a theatre of which he is a considerable shareholder, no persuasion, and no offer, however tempting, could induce him to accept one farthing for his six performances! Such conduct as this is so totally without precedent amongst the theatrical community, that it is a duty to record it, a duty which is quite equal to the pleasure of doing it. Mr. Kemble's re-appearance must have contributed at least FIFTEEN HUNDRED POUNDS to the treasury of the theatre, which, without such aid, it never would have seen; and as that contribution arrived at so ticklish a period of the season as that of Lent, it must have been doubly acceptable. Heaven forbid that, as an old manager, I should grudge Madame Vestris such a piece of good fortune as this!—On the contrary, I rejoice at it, and repeat, that there is no meed too great for so much talent and beauty as she personally subscribes to her present perilous undertaking; but I cannot help adding, that it is an instance of such extraordinary and timely “luck” acceptable as it would always have been, as never fell to *my* lot. Having so fully given my opinion on the utter impossibility, under existing circumstances, of making money, or rather barely avoiding ruin, by the

management of the patent theatres, and having adduced so many instances in favour of my argument, I regret to make the further addition to the list of sufferers of this delightful lady. I have been told, and I believe it to be true, that Madame Vestris has received 10,000*l.* more than was taken in the best of Mr. Macready's two seasons; and I have moreover heard, which I sincerely trust is *not* true, that notwithstanding such great receipts, she has lost considerably. That she has suffered *some* loss admits of no dispute, for she honestly confessed as much in her parting address: and if, therefore, with her acknowledged attainments, her admirable tact and taste, her professional station, her indefatigable labours, her popularity, and the all powerful charm her sex carries along with it, *she* has not been able to "put money in her house;" who *can* be expected to do so? There are several points, in the past season's management, open to objection, in my humble opinion; still this is only a matter of opinion between two persons of experience: but that any management characterized by so much liberality and industry should not be highly prosperous, is a disgrace to a civilized country.

This, however, is not the last instance of the manner in which some of my arguments have been borne out, nor of the advantages enjoyed by others that were denied to me, nor of the doings that were approved of in others, while they were condemned in me. When, after years of severe trial and severe loss, after the introduction of all attainable talent, foreign and native, after

the representation of some of the most popular pieces ever known, I was advised, *after* THE SEASON HAD ALREADY EXTENDED TO 142 NIGHTS, to give a few promenade concerts to enable me the more effectually to return to the usual dramatic performances, the yell from one end of the theatrical part of the metropolis to the other was enough to make the welkin ring. I was denounced as a common mountebank, and my respected vituperator, George Robins, mustered up an extra quantity of senatorial language to astound the listeners to his harangue, at the General Annual Meeting of the Proprietors. At this said General Meeting, the delight of the body, at having secured such "a catch" as the *then* new Lessee, amounted almost to fits—they had all sorts of visions of dividends floating before their eyes, shares were set down at once as at a premium, and it was not doubted that there would be a scramble in the market, even to get a peep at one. Halycon dreams! what a pity it is the beauties should ever have awoke from them! I have more than once come to the conclusion, (after reading this report of their past and their present, and this anticipation of their future fortunes,) that if I had happened to have entered the room in the midst of their disappointments on the one hand, and their ecstasies on the other, they would have thrown all the looking-glasses in it at my head. It is really distressing, if you come to think it over, that all the flow of language displayed at this memorable meeting, should have been distributed, however gratuitously, in vain, and that the

vocabulary of slang and slip-slop should have been exhausted to no earthly purpose.

It was not very long after they had indulged in the brightest of all possible prospects, that the new lessee, who had been promising to *them* (for he knew better than to promise any thing of the kind to himself) a most auspicious opening, began to waver in the fulfilment of such promise. As the introduction of all such expensive expedients as Mr. Bunn had resorted to was voted quite out of the question, and as the sole reliance was to be placed on a good, and not too expensive, a working company, it was reasonably expected that an effective force would be collected together for the opening of the campaign. When, however, it became manifest that the aforesaid "working company" consisted principally of the *dramatis personæ* recently figuring at the Strand Theatre, and that with themselves they imported the additional treat of the pieces they had been playing there, their faith in the "pet" began to waver, and shares subsided at once to par. Confidence was not altogether shaken, because a strong impression prevailed that something in reserve was coming out to astonish and delight mankind. When, however, the panic in the Drury Lane money market became known, shares fell at once to a deplorable discount, and from that moment until the final close of NINETY-NINE NIGHTS, between the 26th October, 1839, and the 28th February, 1840, all was "like a phantasma or a hideous dream." What! A Drury Lane season, the first of a new lessee, to extend but to

four months, and in those four months not to a hundred nights of performance ! I feel assured my worthy friend, Mr. Hammond, will not be weak enough to suppose that my aim is to turn *him* into ridicule ; for, though it may not be of much use to him, I have a very high opinion of him. My object is to throw into the ridicule which they so justly deserve a meddling set of people, who, without a particle of information or experience, consider themselves to be theatrical judges, and by obtruding their advice where it is neither wished nor asked, lead to the involvement of a man, in schemes which, without such counsel, he never would have dreamt of. When the doors of the theatre were finally shut, the wretched shares which had been fluctuating between premium, par, and discount, turned sulky, and were heard no more of, until all of a sudden a tangible offer was made by Mr. Beale. Unluckily for the good of the concern, Beale did not happen to be "a pet," and an alteration in the terms accepted at the first meeting having been insisted on at the second, Mr. Beale "took up his bed and walked."

But as Mr. George Robins said of my effort last year, "the worst remains behind," for the building "which had been consecrated to the genius of Kemble "and Mrs. Siddons" (not that either of them ever played in it!) "has been turned into THE SHILLING THEATRE!" What the devil will Robins say now, when THE VERY ACT into which I was *forced* but for a short time as a matter of expediency, is now adopted

as a deliberate letting from the body of the proprietary to a new tenant? The shares which, under George's hammer, stood little chance of realizing a shilling a piece, would not now, I should say, be taken as a gift ! and all this has been the result of "weeding" the old committee (almost every one of whom was a practical man of business, generally conversant with theatrical affairs, especially with those of Drury Lane) and substituting in their place two gentlemen as deliciously ignorant of theatrical affairs as a young sucking pig. If I mistake not, there will be some capital FUN at the NEXT General Meeting ; but, in the mean time, it is quite fun enough for me to see the commission of the deeds for which I was so impudently assailed, now carried out by the indirect means of the parties who assailed me.

The howl about legitimacy, so fully commented upon in the ensuing pages will, I suppose, soon cease to be heard. It is dying in the distance daily ; for while the miserable pretence of plays "from the text of Shakspeare" has failed of drawing an extra shilling, *the Merry Wives of Windsor*, in its altered OPERATIC FORM, has drawn to Covent Garden Theatre some of the best houses of the past season. So it did in the season of 1823-24, when I was stage manager under Mr. Elliston. I placed it for the first time in that shape, upon the stage of Drury Lane Theatre, supported then in a manner which I very much doubt to see supported so soon again—Dowton, Wallack, Harley, Braham, Gattie, Browne, Miss Stephens, and Madame Vestris, sustaining the principal parts. The

concocters of humbug must not suppose that people do not see through all this. Stuff! they may be gulled at first, but they very soon see through the deception which has been practised upon them\*.

Other circumstances, more painful than all the rest, have rendered a proem to the following pages absolutely necessary; for since the completion of the major part of them, several melancholy deaths have occurred—of those same personages in whose lives is mixed up the subject-matter of them all. When these volumes were more than two-thirds on their journey towards completion, intelligence was received of the death of Mr. Stephen Price, my predecessor in the lesseeship of Drury Lane Theatre. Then James Smith, the humorous, the intelligent, the agreeable—one whom society in general, and more especially the society of letters, could

\* Then, look at one of the very last attempts at a little bit of legitimacy, that has met with as signal and melancholy a discomfiture as can be well imagined or believed. The Theatre erected by Miss Kelly in Dean Street, Soho, opened its portals on Monday, May 25th, and closed them four days afterwards, on Friday, May 29th. Does not this speak volumes to those silly people who will not understand the national character, nor learn that there is no such thing as cramming down the public throat doctrines that are not palatable to the public taste? I rank myself amongst the foremost of Miss Kelly's admirers, and was gratified in affording her the use of Drury Lane Theatre to take her farewell (as I conceived it to be). But how, on calm consideration, this gifted actress could reconcile to herself, if it be her speculation, the outlay of the gainings of a long theatrical life, on the erection of an additional theatre to the eighteen, or twenty, already in existence in an untheatrical city? where almost all the others are on the verge of bankruptcy, and above all in such an outlandish part of the world as Dean Street, Soho? I regret it deeply for the sake of the fair *artiste*, but I rejoice at it for the sake of the art.



ill afford to lose ! Then Sir Thomas Mash, so much of whose official correspondence is herein interspersed. Then, again, one of the principal devotees at the shrine of the dramatic art, popular in all circles, and beloved in his own, General Lincoln Stanhope, has been suddenly torn from the enjoyments of this fragile life ! And the unpretending, anxious, industrious, willing little actor, and confidential friend and servant, John Hughes (whilome the factotum of the gifted Kean, and Secretary to the Drury Lane Theatrical Fund) has gone, as I heard one of the world's wags say, to give an account of that fund to Garrick, the founder.

To these may be added the name of a gentleman more devoted to the stage, during the greater part of his long life, than most of those whom he has left behind him—Mr. Const. He was known to, and respected by, almost every one of the great spirits who lived in his own enlightened times, and was a permanent friend and patron to artists and to art. When Mr. Const, acting for Mr. Harris, concluded the engagement with Munden (detailed further on) by offering him £.4, £.5, and £.6 per week, Munden positively replied, " I can't think of it, sir—it is too much—it is indeed—I shall never be able to gain you as much." The community at large owe an expression of deep regret for the death of this venerable gentleman, had he done nothing more for the public good than the introduction of such a performer to their notice as Munden. Mr. Const died in possession of a private box at Covent Garden Theatre, which, at his death, fell into the hands of the Proprietors, and his large

fortune—the result of an honourable and distinguished professional career—he bequeathed to a host of friends who, with a few exceptions, had little claim upon him, and, consequently, are not particularly grateful for the bequest.

But the mournful list is not, alas, filled up. The death of Mr. Waldegrave, not a year after his marriage with the amiable daughter of my respected friend, Braham; and the demise of Mr. Francis Bacon, not a year after his marriage with the daughter of Mr. Horace Twiss, are sad bereavements indeed, and especially in the instance of the latter, where the literary world has lost one of its contributors, in addition to the injury society has sustained by the departure from it of so noble a fellow. And then, who is there who will not lament the fall, in a foreign country, of that popular officer, Colonel Lyster, to whom my Canadian letter (page 215, vol. iii.) was addressed? one of the best-tempered, best-hearted, and agreeable men that ever adorned the society of *any* country!

These are all mournful records to make, but there is one more to render it complete, the account of which death only reached me as I was winding up this tale of sorrow:

“ The harp that once through Tara’s halls

“ The soul of music shed,

“ Now hangs as mute on Tara’s walls

“ As if that soul were fled!”

Paganini died at Nice, on the 27th of last month, and in making such a memorandum, I may be pardoned the substitution of a harp for a fiddle; for a

man who caused a sort of musical revolution in every part of the globe which he visited, may certainly be supposed to have "the soul of music" at his very fingers ends—which was where Paganini had it! Little did I think, while proceeding with my toil, and chronicling the doings of those I had concerted with, I should so soon have to date their demise! It is, indeed, a mournful duty, but being one, I have performed it.

Thank Heaven I have been spared the record of more than the sanguinary and incredible attempt made upon the sacred life of England's Queen. Her Gracious Majesty had signified her intention of honouring the German Opera with her presence on the evening of the day (Wednesday, June 10, 1840!) when this appalling act was committed. It is sufficiently recent for every one to have drawn their own conclusion—I only herald mine:—

What can that heart be made of, that would seek  
To canker in its bud,  
And turn the current of, fair England's cheek  
From beauty into blood?

None but the demon art, which first prevailed  
O'er woman's guileless breast,  
And, stalking over earth, has now assailed  
Its brightest and its best!

But though it scatter its envenomed darts  
Around our Regal Shrine,  
Their shafts must pierce through millions' subjects' hearts,  
Before they can reach thine!

One thing the deed will prove—all else above—  
Though steeped in crime it be,  
How deep, and fond, and lasting, is the love  
Thy people have for thee !

With reference to the tendency of my animadversions, and the freedom of my remarks, upon a few persons, in the course of the following pages, I wish it to be distinctly borne in mind that I have assailed no one who was not the first assailant. I have had the misfortune to fall under the vituperative lash of some of Sir E. L. Bulwer's harangues; and as he thought proper to disparage my management *of* the stage, I have thought proper to disparage his writings *for* the stage; and both of us, no doubt, have been regulated by a strict regard to truth and justice. Then "my learned friend," Mr. Serjeant Talfourd, having thought fit to hold me up to ridicule in a public court, I have retaliated upon him in a publication—*tit-for-tat* may not be a legal definition, but it is a worldly one. Mr. Forster, a person of whom I knew nothing, and who knew about as much of me, attacked me week after week, through the medium of a public journal, with the two-fold object of debasing me, and of upholding my antagonist and his particular friend, the lessee of the rival theatre. It was not likely that I should spare *him* the first time I got a pen in my hand; and although I have not bestowed upon him a tithe part of the chastisement which the vituperation that he heaped upon me, without *any* reason whatever deserved, I have furnished him with sufficient mate-

rials to enable him to chaunt the good old ballad of "remember *me*," for the rest of his natural days.

As far as regards the performers, it must naturally be supposed that I should deal freely with *them*, and above all with one of the principal amongst them. I cannot be supposed to have any particular devotion for a person who committed upon me the outrage that Mr. Macready did; nor any great degree of admiration for a system of management arrayed, personally as well as hostilely, against my own. I hope it is unnecessary to say that I have made no references whatever to private life; my comments are entirely of a professional nature, and as both of us are public characters—as both have been managers of the two first theatres in the empire—as he has personally, as well as professionally, attacked me, and as I do not happen to think him as great an ornament to his profession as I willingly admit and know him to be to private society, I have not hesitated to record my opinion of his performance, and of his management. Of my worthy friend, Farren, I have not said more than I should have wished him to say of me, had our positions been reversed; my observations having reference solely to what I consider to be the high and ruinous nature of his remuneration; beyond that, either as an actor or as a man, he is above the reach of malice, though within the pale of envy, and one whom I admire and respect in his relative situations. In the Introduction to Mr. Hazlitt's "View of the English Stage," I remember his saying, "my apolo-

"gies are particularly due to Mr. Bartley, for having "accused him of being fat;" and if that gentleman found it necessary to make an apology on such a point, it is still more incumbent on me, for I have stated that although Bartley is even fatter than myself, he is easily seen through—so he is!

The main drift of the following observations is to clear myself, and vindicate my management, from the reckless misrepresentations that have been made of both, and the further purport of them is to point out to those professors who should be the support of their art, how frightfully they have conducted to its downfall—but it requires a voice of louder warning than mine, I fear, to bring them to conviction. When *Matilda* sought to dissuade her son, *Fitzharding*, from a continuation of the bandit's life he led, she directed his gaze to the carcass of a murderer, suspended from an adjoining tree,

"Where every blast to memorize his shame  
"May shrilly whistle through his hollow bones,  
"And in his tongueless jaws a voice renew,  
"To preach with more than mortal eloquence."

Some such awful demonstration as this is before *their* eyes, if they will but turn their head to look upon it. Do not the tenantless halls of Drury Lane Theatre "preach with more than mortal eloquence," to those who lent their best assistance to render them such a desert? The nature of that assistance, and what I conceive to have been my own long struggles

to avert so lamentable a consummation, will herein be unfolded. My remonstrance has chiefly been directed against the head offenders ; not merely from the enormity of their offence, but from the example their proceedings have held out to those beneath them in talent, pretension, and expectation. It would have been an almost endless task to anatomize many puny, yet at the same time, mischievous efforts of the secondary class of the histrionic community ; notwithstanding, while sailing with the under current, they are comparatively as important as those who are afloat on the broader and bolder stream. In this respect, as in the instance of many others rather associated *with* theatrical people than theatrical people themselves, I have preferred adopting the principle of *Junius*, by “not attracting public attention to those who will only pass without censure, “when they pass without observation.”

*London, June 22, 1840.*

In the following Work will be found certain remarks upon the Garrick Club. As a Member of that Society, the Publisher thinks it right to say, that the opinions therein expressed are those of the Author,—not his own, and are adopted, as he conceives, on misinformation.

*8, New Burlington Street,*

*June 25, 1840.*



# CONTENTS.

---

## CHAPTER I.

	Page
Inutility of Biography—Various views of management and various managers—Lord Byron and Mr. Robins—Receipts to Kean's first appearance—Mr. Henry Harris—Mr. R. Sheil—Mr. C. Kemble—Mr. Elliston—King George and King Robert—Break up of the old understanding between the two Theatres—and its consequences—Mr. Price and Mr. Bish—A bad actor a bad bargain—The American Stage the ruin of the English Stage—Advantages of utility—Curious illustration thereof—Combination of Kean and Young in tragedy, and Liston and Mathews in comedy—Ingredients of an utilitarian—Failure of the theatres the fault of the public—Sir Robert Walpole, and his medical advisers . . . . .	1

## CHAPTER II.

Indifference of the public to theatrical amusements—Advantages possessed by the Foreign stage—Consequent cultivation of the art—A few singers do not constitute an Opera—Difficulties under which the large theatres labour—Folly of reduced prices—Necessity of reduced salaries—Lord

	Page
Chamberlain—Difference between authority and oppression—Sir E. L. Bulwer and the Marquis Conyngham—Licences to be had for asking—Hardship on the Haymarket theatre complained of by the manager to the public—The Duke of Sussex's opinion of the proper support of the London Stage . . . . .	32

### CHAPTER III.

Performers and their salaries, past and present—Their deportment under different circumstances—The article of engagement of a leading actor, and its mutual advantages—Consequences of befriending a performer—James Smith and the Zoological Gardens—Horses and Actors, managed by old Astley—Cox <i>versus</i> Kean—Singular letter—Salaries of Mathews, Munden, Fawcett, Quick, Edwin, Irish Johnstone, C. Kemble, Macready, Ellen Tree, compared with those of Farren, Liston, Power, George Cooke, John Kemble, Mrs. Jordan—Different notions of comfort—Actors the destruction of dramatic literature—Knowles—Bulwer—Colman—Inchbald—Morton—Reynolds, &c. . . . .	52
---	----

### CHAPTER IV.

A London manager as he is, and as he ought to be—The conceit of authors and actors contrasted—Times when theatres were prosperous—Garrick's salary and season—"Orders" the cause of all kinds of <i>dis</i> -orders—The press and its privileges—Difference of value in paper and other currency—Disadvantages of people not paying for their admission—Increase of newspapers—A favour no boon—Individual opinion founded on general criticism—Disadvantages of steam to a theatre—Success and talent not synonymous—Reasons why no one ever should be a manager . . . . .	74
---	----

## CHAPTER V.

	Page
The value of experience exemplified—The general result of all prosecutions—The Garrick Club—What it ought to effect, and what it does—Thomas Campbell's reception in it—Singular success leading to singular disaster—Kean and Macready's Shaksperian language—Madame Malibran's mind defined in her correspondence—Mr. Hackett and Mr. George Colman—Mr. Downton's opinion of American editions of English plays—Mr. Kean's death, and his last appearance preceding it—Union of the two Patent theatres—Causes, or rather reasons, for its necessity . . .	91

## CHAPTER VI.

A good address very desirable—Mr. Henry Harris's opinion of the author's—Opposition to it—Mr. Bulwer and his Bill—The Duke of Gloucester—False reports likely to lead to other reports—The Duke of Wellington's favourite maxima—Symptoms of hostilities—Mr. Sheridan Knowles, and his "co-mates in exile"—Memorial to His Majesty, and its gracious reception—Different views taken by different authors—The King a better judge than his subjects—Two theatres better than nineteen, in an undramatic city, logically discussed—A trip to Paris . . . . .	107
---	-----

## CHAPTER VII.

Mems. of a Manager during a Continental trip—Terms on which to meet a bad dramatist—French honour, and its reward—Opinions on the novelties of the day—Mademoiselle
---

Falcon and Madame Vestris—Death of a celebrated theatrical character—A man can never be drowned who is born to be hanged—Mr. Braham and his talent for anecdote—Opening of the patent theatres after their union—Free List—Some on it “more free than welcome”—John Barnett and John Bull—Musical genius—First effects of the GRAND JUNCTION, and its overflow . . . . .

Page

124

## CHAPTER VIII.

Ambassadors—foreign and otherwise—Advantages of a *tout ensemble*—the decline of Pantomime, the cause, and the loss supplied—A humorous instance of stage direction—*Gustavus* and *St. George*—Ducrow's parrot, and the Hebrew Melodies—Count D'Orsay and Mr. Kenney—Mr. Farren and Prince Talleyrand—Cabinets of St. James's and the Tuileries—The case of a wig—The best way to cut a play—Alarm at the prospect of war allayed—William Godwin—*Sardanapalus*—Lord Byron, Mrs. Mardyn—Mr. Moore—Mister William Dimond . . . . .

141

## CHAPTER IX.

Jephtha's Vow—a rash one—How to make a splendid fortune—The Lord Chamberlain in a dilemma—Three kings—on real one, and two dummies—Mr. Braham and Mr. Macready—Mr. Liston and His Majesty—“*ego et rex meus*”—The Page and the Peer—A good performer a bad judge—Captain Fitzclarence and his mother—How, in reality, to cast a play of Shakspeare, and to lay out a stage—Difference between profit and expenditure—House of Lords—Marquis of Clan-

	Page
ricarde—Duke of Devonshire—Duke of Wellington—Lord John Russell—Another defeat—Saints and sinners—Lord Stanley's notions of compensation very correct . . . .	176

## CHAPTER X.

/ A visit to Germany, and its theatres—Advantages of a Dutch town—Meat regulated by quantity rather than quality—Arnheim—Lord Howick—Mrs. Trollope's ideas of comfort—Professor Livius at Dusseldorf—The value of Kings and Kings' bones—the Rhine a case of Rhino—A touch of Poetry—Distance between the " <i>diet of worms</i> ," and a cold chicken—singular rencontre of three singular characters—Studying German—Heidelberg and its glories—Strasburgh and its <i>pâtés</i> —Mr. Charles Kemble—Reduced prices, and their consequences—Young actors in Shakspeare's plays—Mr. Forrest—Mr. Murray—Mr. Bishop—Manfred—The Morning Chronicle—Payne Collier—Pierce Egan . . . .	197
---	-----

## CHAPTER XI.

Dissolution—Difference between a capital fellow and a fellow of capital—Mr. Stanfield and Mr. Ducrow—Family sorrows—Mr. Farren and a distinguished nobleman—Additional verses to a popular song—Death and drunkenness—Sir Robert Peel and the Patent Theatres—A distinction between *ways* and *means*—Mr. Poole and the horn blower—Death of Mathews—Italian *airs*—Laporte's opinion of them in a letter—Bunn's opinion of them in a song—Malibran's engagement—Unprecedented terms—One man found to refuse what all the rest of mankind were trying to possess—A droll and a

deep letter from Malibran—Extraordinary interference of the Lord Chamberlain—Killigrew's Patent—George the Third's Patent, and the fees paid for it—Charles Kemble's opinion of the Lord Chamberlain's powers—A surviving regicide—Deaths of Bellini, and Isaac Pocock, &c. . . .	Page 221
---	-------------

## CHAPTER XII.

"Repeal of the Union" carried—State of the dramatic world examined—An actor's theory and practice at variance—His former and present salaries at greater variance—Horne Tooke's opinion of expedition—Industrious fleas—No unanimity—Shakspeare neglected for want of actors—Demonstration of the rents of yesterday and to-day—Reduction of prices, and vitiation of taste—List of Company—Macbeth's music—Othello's attraction—A tragedian proves his own want of it—An article of engagement—The Jew, and the Jewess—Mr. Balfe—The Provost of Bruges—Distinction between a tuck-hunter and a tuft-hunter . . . .	269
---	-----

# THE STAGE:

BOTH

BEFORE AND BEHIND THE CURTAIN.

---

## CHAPTER I.

Inutility of Biography—Various views of management and various managers—Lord Byron and Mr. Robins—Receipts to Kean's first appearance—Mr. Henry Harris—Mr. R. Sheil—Mr. C. Kemble—Mr. Elliston—King George and King Robert—Break up of the old understanding between the two Theatres—and its consequences—Mr. Price and Mr. Bish—A bad actor a bad bargain—The American Stage the ruin of the English Stage—Advantages of utility—Curious illustration thereof—Combination of Kean and Young in tragedy, and Liston and Mathews in comedy—Ingredients of an utilitarian—Failure of the theatres the fault of the public—Sir Robert Walpole, and his medical advisers.

THOSE who open the following pages for the mere purposes of idle curiosity, to ascertain if the writer had any ordinary or extraordinary father or mother, uncle or aunt, brother or sister, relative or friend,

will decidedly be disappointed. Those who seek for information or amusement, it will be his utmost endeavour to satisfy.

The object of the work is not biographical—it can be a matter of no moment to any one, ignorant of the fact, when or where the writer was born, what was his parentage, or what the nature of his education. Though the prejudice may run in favour of the usual number of limbs, and a limited quantity of back\*, yet it would no more detract from my doings, for the stranger to be told that I was short of a leg, or had a hump on each shoulder, than it would add to them for him to hear I was a perfect Adonis.

I have stood in the dwellings, and beside the tombs, of some of earth's greatest people, with whose biography the world at large is perfectly familiar, and heard such monstrous falsehoods roundly asserted as truths, that I have returned home content, as a very little person, with the knowledge there was no biography of myself extant. In the room where Shakespeare is generally supposed to have been born, at Stratford-upon-Avon, my late esteemed and eminent friend, Charles Mathews, and I, have heard its defunct tenant, Mrs. Hornby, of garrulous memory, with a pair of bright blue eyes glistening under a flaxen front, positively aver, that a rusty rapier, hanging up over the mantel piece, was the identical one worn by the poet when he enacted the character of *Romeo*—a

\* The Rivals—Act III. Scene 1.



character which, it is perfectly well known, *he never enacted at all!* We two have been "authoritatively" informed, in the lodge of Warwick Castle, that a metal vessel shown there by the porter, holding about ONE HUNDRED GALLONS, contained, when full, the daily breakfast of the renowned Guy, Earl of Warwick, and that the instrument in it, resembling in size and shape a modern pitchfork, was what he used to eat it with—a recital which naturally induced Mathews to say, the noble Earl was able to *swallow* more than he and I, put together, could.

There are those now living, whose ancestors landed with the Norman, and were a party to the celebration of the historical anecdote yclept "the Battle of Hastings," whom Duke William would not have suffered to wipe his sword clean from the stain of that memorable onslaught. What could biography do for such varlets as these? There are those also living who, holding a conspicuous place in the world's eye, are readily disposed to believe they had ancestors, but have not the remotest conception who they were. The man who

"Was not of an age, but for all time,"

has very truly said, that "some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them." It is not for me to say, what I have achieved, but I have had a great deal "thrust upon me," which I have found unpleasant to bear, and extremely difficult to get rid of. The reader, I

imagine, would much rather hear all the particulars of this "greatness," than any thing of him who has had to groan beneath its fardels.

Biography is but an attempt at fame, and fame is the most worthless strumpet that ever beguiled a man into a conception of his own importance :

" For this men write, speak, preach, and heroes kill,  
" And bards burn what they call their midnight taper,  
" To have, when the original is dust,  
" A name, a d——d bad picture, and worse bust!"

Stuff, stuff! if the contents of this book are worth a pinch of snuff, without being subject to the frequent consequences of one, *viz.* a very loud sneeze—it will be owing to the matter embodied in it, emanating from others, rather than to the manner in which it will be imparted by me. The reader, therefore, whom I have not the honour to class among my acquaintance, will be good enough to be satisfied with a statement of the simple fact that, like the rest of my fellow creatures, I have had the average number of relations—that my father wore a sword instead of swallowing one—that I was considered, as the Rev. Mr. Plum-tree\* has it, "respectable till I took a turn for the "stage"—that by some I am considered rather good

\* The departed divine immortalised by George Colman's celebrated lines, beginning

" There was an old woman, who lived in Dundee."

looking, and by others remarkably ugly—that I was forty-three years old last April (not the first, mind !) and that I have a very even temper, when I am not in a passion ! What more could all the biographers on earth do for me than this ?

Depend upon it, that the great secret of composition, be it for the stage or the study, is, to arrive at the point, and not by too circuitous a route. If I were peculiarly gifted with a descriptive faculty, I might amuse the reader with the adventures of the school boy, the aspirations of the lover, and the earliest dreams of the youth ; for there are few of us, even of the dullest, who could not recite some “ moving incident, by flood or field,” in which they have chanced to play a leading part. To me this seems all foreign to the purpose ; and I prefer accordingly confining myself to the actions of others rather than to any particular account of my own, unless in connection with them. If the reader could have witnessed the swagger of many puppets whose strings I have had the task of pulling for some years past—of some who, without a soul on earth to claim connection with, console themselves with the hereditary pride of at all events being descendants of the earliest navigators whom Noah enlisted in his crew !—of others who, blest with all the family advantages of life, have fore-sworn and disgraced them—of boasters with nothing to boast of, and of complainers with much to vaunt themselves upon—of the *self*-satisfied and the *dis*-satisfied, the turbulent and the vain—he would feel he was

acting the wiser part in leaving unchronicled his own participation in any such peculiarities.

We are told that "self is a subject on which all men are supposed to be fluent, and none agreeable," and I for one agree in the doctrine. The biography of those connected with the stage, as far as they are individually concerned, is generally a very dull affair—it is only by association it becomes diverting; and in the full persuasion, therefore, that the public would rather a thousand times hear the anecdotes of those I have had so much intercourse with, than any relating to myself, I enter upon my task.

At page 190 of the second volume of Grimaldi's memoirs, the editor (who adopts the facetious coxcombry of calling himself "Boz") states, with reference to an engagement I gave the renowned JOE many years ago at Birmingham, "Mr. Bunn behaved on this occasion, as Grimaldi states he did upon every other in which he was concerned, with great liberality;" and to this admission the aforesaid editor condescends to append the following note:—"In another part of the data upon which these memoirs are founded, Grimaldi has the following remarks concerning this gentleman, which, as he appears to have been anxious that they should obtain publicity, the editor subjoins in his own words: 'A great deal has been said about, and indeed against, Mr. Bunn, since he has become a London Manager; but I have had many opportunities of observing him, and his mode of doing business, and

“ ‘ I feel satisfied that he has most liberal notions,  
“ ‘ and would, if it were in his power, amply recom-  
“ ‘ pense, according to their talents, any *artiste* em-  
“ ‘ ployed by him. I beg it may be understood that  
“ ‘ in this remark I do not allude in any way to my-  
“ ‘ self; I speak from what I know of his conduct  
“ ‘ with regard to others; and if ever his industry  
“ ‘ meets with the success it deserves, I feel certain  
“ ‘ that the liberality of disposition I have spoken of  
“ ‘ will be displayed in a commensurate degree.’ ”

In reply to the “ great deal that has been said  
“ about, and indeed against, Mr. Bunn since he has  
“ become a London Manager,” Mr. Bunn takes the  
liberty of speaking at last for himself. Vituperation  
is the fate of all public men, and one who has been so  
much, and so long before the public as myself, must  
or ought to have been prepared for a given *quantum*  
—it is the more than *sufficit* that I find fault with.  
I have been aimed at by too many shafts to escape,  
and though brought down at last, the marksmen will  
find they have “scotched, not killed” their prey. The  
tremendous quantity of down-right falsehoods that have  
been put into circulation respecting so humble an in-  
dividual, have induced many people to believe, until  
they saw the animal, that it must be one with two  
snouts, and at least half-a-dozen tails. I have en-  
deavoured to console myself at times with the bit of  
comfort the French poet has prescribed, when he  
says—

"Quand on a perdu tous ses ennemis,

"On a perdu tous ses charmes;"

and to feel convinced that unless I possessed some extraordinary qualifications, I should never have provoked such extraordinary hostility. I have however felt the one, without finding out the other.

The unprecedented circumstance of any person undertaking to manage the two National Theatres, at a time when no other could be found to enter upon the management of even one, undoubtedly engendered a more than ordinary degree of that "envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness," which constitute the creed of histrionic life, and of those in any respect connected with it. I shall take the liberty, however, of adopting a course somewhat different from that which has been pursued by those with whom I have had intercourse and dealing. Instead of resorting to an *on dit*,—to the ambiguous prelude of "a certain manager of one of our largest theatres"—to the puzzling inuendo of "we are informed on the authority of a principal performer"—to "it is reported"—"we have reason to believe"—"but one opinion seems to prevail"—"for on our parts we think," &c. &c. and all such awful twaddle, I purpose applying myself to deeds and documents, to persons and their peculiarities, to men and things by their right names. I will not encumber my record with allusions never meant.

"Ne'er doubt

"This—when I speak, I *don't hint*, but *speak out*!"

I will treat of all as I have found them, exercising to others the same degree of freedom, that others have exercised towards me. Feelings of disappointment or personal annoyance shall in no instance take precedence of experience, or matters of fact. Of that little article "disappointment," I do not feel a sensation, being vain enough to think that I have conducted, unassisted, *THE NATIONAL STAGE* for a longer consecutive period than any successor will be found to do; and that within the same period I have produced on it more attractive and talented performers and performances than years to come will furnish. At all events, a full account of such doings will be found chronicled in their proper places, and, without apprehension, I am content to abide the judgment of the public.

When a man has been reviewed seventy-seven times, he is not apt to care very much about the seventy-eighth! When a manager has been heralded by the asinine tenant of a rostrum at the Auction Mart as one whose exertions had raised the shares of a theatre to an unprecedented value, and has subsequently been denounced by the same breath as a Bartholomew Fair exhibitor, he can smile with considerable complacency on the quack who could deliver such conflicting sentiments. They partake, to a great degree, of the spirit of that celebrated couplet,

"I have seen the king hiss'd, and then caress'd;

"But don't pretend to settle which was best!"

for it would puzzle a greater conjuror than even the personage in question to arrive at any just conclusion, from the hyperbole of the one opinion, and the detraction of the other. But to business.

So much has been written, and continues to be written, opposed to truth, and defiance of experience, upon the subject of the Drama, more particularly in its connection with the Theatres Royal Drury Lane and Covent Garden, that it appears doubtful if the observations of a practical person will be received with the attention they would otherwise be entitled to claim. The dramatic intelligence purveyed by observers on the one side, and the theoretical notions entertained by speculators on the other, are only calculated to mislead the public, who, if left to themselves, will be tolerably right in the long run.

It is not under any egotistical impression of the infallibility of my own opinions, that I have entered upon the task of recording them ; but

“ When F——’s read, and C——’s understood,

“ I can’t help putting in my claim to praise.”

So vast a quantity of nonsense has been published on the duties of a manager, their fulfilment and non-fulfilment ; such wanton falsehoods have on most occasions been invented and circulated, and such erroneous impressions have thereby been imbibed, that having come in for rather more than my due share of flagellation, I have thought it necessary at last to



respond to it. The reader will, at the first blush, be most probably of opinion that this might have been accomplished in a more unpretending and concise manner, than in three octavo volumes; but as it will be necessary to speak of many "worthier sons of Sparta" than myself—to introduce authentic documents, original anecdotes, and a mass of miscellaneous matter, that will, it is hoped, inform and amuse him; I trust he will not, at all events, draw his conclusions, until he has done me the honour of perusing what is herein set down.

The management of the national theatres having proved a failure in the hands of those who have hitherto undertaken it, there must be some latent cause which the speculators have not inquired into, or the commentators dilated upon. Since the rebuilding of Drury Lane theatre, in 1812, it has been under the direction of a Sub-Committee, of Messrs. Elliston, Price, Lee, Polhill, and myself; while Covent Garden, since its opening, in 1809, has been under the superintendence of Messrs. Harris, C. Kemble, Laporte, Osbaldiston, Macready, and myself.

In speaking of the earlier management of Drury Lane theatre, under the Sub-Committee, Lord Byron, who was then a member of it, in a letter to Mr. Moore, dated June 12th, 1815, gives the following humorous description of his colleagues, and their respective duties:—

"I wished and wish you were in the Committee  
"with all my heart. It seems so hopeless a business,

“ that the company of a friend would be quite consoling. *My* new function consists in listening to the despair of Cavendish Bradshaw, the hopes of Kinnaird, the wishes of Lord Essex, the complaints of Whitbread, and the calculations of Peter Moore, all of which and whom seem totally at variance. C. Bradshaw wants to light the theatre with *gas*, which may perhaps (if the vulgar be believed) poison half the audience, and all the *dramatis personæ*. Essex has endeavoured to persuade Kean not to get drunk; the consequence of which is, that he has never been sober since. Kinnaird, with equal success, would have convinced Raymond—that he, the said Raymond, had too much salary. Whitbread wants us to assess the pit another sixpence—a d——d insidious proposition—which will end in an O.P. combustion. To crown all, Robins\*, the auctioneer, has the impudence to be displeased, because he has no dividend. The man is a proprietor of shares, and a long-lunged orator in the meetings.”

This letter was written about seventeen months after the introduction of Mr. Kean to the town, whose great attraction, it might be supposed, would have lightened the burthens, and smoothed the difficulties of management. Such was not the case. In the

\* It would seem by this that I am not the only manager of Drury Lane theatre who has fallen under the lash of Mr. Robins's genius. His fulminations against me will be noticed in their proper place.

season 1813-14 (Mr. Kean having made his *début* on the 27th January, 1814), the gross receipts of Drury Lane theatre were £.68,329 1s. 6d., and to Mr. Kean's respective performances, as follows:—

	£.	s.	d.		£.	s.	d.
25 nights of Richard III.	14,063	9	0	average	562	10	8
14 — Shylock	4,921	3	0	—	351	10	0
8 — Hamlet -	4,099	18	6	—	512	9	9
10 — Othello -	4,762	6	0	—	476	4	6
8 — Iago -	3,723	8	6	—	465	8	6
3 — Luke -	1,372	7	6	—	457	9	2
<hr/>				<hr/>			
68 nights produced	£32,942	12	6	gen. average	484	9	0

yet on this very season, there was a loss of £.20,000!!

On the 6th of July, 1815, Mr. Whitbread committed a frightful suicide; an act, by many, attributed, at the time, to disappointment in the success of this theatre. In 1817, Mr. Henry Harris was instigated to assault Mr. Charles Kemble on the stage, for alleged heartless and irritating conduct;—in 1822 Mr. Charles Kemble, as manager of Covent Garden theatre was (together with his partners) attacked by Mr. Macready,

“ These two hated with a hate

“ Found only on the stage!”

in a violently written and very trumpery pamphlet, long since disposed of to the pastry cooks, and in 1836, I was personally assaulted by this latter person, in the unprejudiced discharge of my managerial duties. These extraneous circumstances are merely mentioned, to impress upon the mind of the reader that, whether

in a personal or a pecuniary point of view, the time of a London manager is not passed upon a bed of roses. It will be my duty, as we proceed, to tell him how it *is* passed.

In looking over the list of my predecessors and contemporaries, previously enumerated, it is impossible to deny that it comprises the names of several eminent men; some of ability sufficient to carry on an undertaking, beset with only ordinary difficulties, with every possible success; and that they have failed to do so is, in my humble opinion, attributable to any other cause than their want of capability. The first instance I will advance, shall be that of my late lamented friend, Mr. Henry Harris, who directed Covent Garden theatre from 1809 to 1822. He enlisted under his banners, during this period, the most eminent people in every department that have ever adorned a theatre, on salaries which, compared to the outrageous ones of the present day, were literally humble. Mr. Harris possessed the necessary qualifications for his enterprise; he was endowed with a sound understanding, an acute observation, a clear judgment, and great decision, together with the (sometimes fatal) gift of an excellent heart. He united the *suavité in modo* with the *fortitèr in re*, and exercised those attributes with gratification to himself, and without oppression to those he ruled over. His exertions were sometimes crowned with the most brilliant success that could be anticipated—at other times they were frustrated by those causes that will

eventually frustrate the efforts of any *entrepreneur*. Mr. Harris, to be sure, had to contend with a heavy building debt ; but that might have been overcome, had the general patronage of the public been commensurate with the spirit that catered for their amusement.

The trite proverb, that "One man may steal a horse while another may not look over the hedge," has been seldom more fully exemplified than in the circumstance I am about to mention. I have been assailed, in unmeasured terms, for having dared to pollute, on sundry occasions, the arena which has been immortalised by the genius of a Garrick, a Kemble, a Siddons, a Kean, &c., &c., with equestrian entertainments. It is perfectly true that I have resorted to *quadruped* performances, owing to the total want of attraction in *biped* ones, and I should do so again ; but such attacks upon me come with a funny kind of grace, when it is recollected that horses were introduced on the national stage, at Covent Garden theatre in the season 1810-11, then under the management of the aforesaid Mr. John Kemble ! (one of whose shrines I am charged with polluting), and at the very time he was performing there with his illustrious sister, Mrs. Siddons ! It is, moreover, but fair to argue that far less reason for their introduction existed then than now, inasmuch as that theatre could boast at the time of a company not to be surpassed in talent. These entertainments were "applauded to the very echo," and were the means of Mr. Harris's treasury realising that season a receipt of upwards of

£100,000! When the community at large thus uphold an amusement with their approbation, and patronise it with their purses, the hostility of an individual is not entitled to the respect, nor does it carry with it the weight, the writer may imagine\*.

But the voice of praise, or the pen of detraction have, in the present instance, lost any influence they might be supposed to possess. Mr. Harris died on the 12th of last May, and a man more deservedly respected, or more generally beloved, never descended into "the populous homes of death." The records of Covent Garden theatre furnish ample testimony of his industry, his talent, and his liberality—the last thought in his mind was the aggrandisement of himself, the first was the advancement of the profession he swayed, and the honourable fulfilment of his engagements; and while it is a sad solace to his friends to know that he is where "Nothing can harm him further," it may be a trifling one to reflect that he has left no one behind fit to succeed him. His theatre stands where it did, but the days of its glory are altogether passed away.

Mr. Harris was succeeded, or rather displaced, through various machinations of various people, by

\* Condemnatory opinions, emanating from persons mostly incapable of forming a sound one, remind me of a whimsical stage direction given by my worthy friend, Mr. Sheil, Vice-President of the Board of Trade; who, at one of the rehearsals of his play of *Bellamira*, exclaimed, with genuine Hibernian accent and emphasis, "Here, Mr. Young, you must draw your sword, and find you haven't got one!"

Mr. Charles Kemble, in the year 1822; and although it was very reasonably supposed that he came to the task, prepared with the advantages of a fine education, long experience, good connection, considerable attainments, &c., &c., yet true it is that, in the year 1829, to such a state of ruin had his management, with all these advantages, reduced Covent Garden theatre, that the property was seized by the parochial authorities, and advertised for sale; and but for public subscriptions and voluntary contributions of the performers, expecting to profit by its re-opening, it could not possibly have survived this calamity. It is equally true that Mr. Charles Kemble was taken possession of by a dangerous quality called

——— “Vaulting ambition!

“Which o’erleaps itself,”

that contributed very materially to such a position of affairs—notwithstanding which, an unprejudiced observer cannot deny that many splendid efforts to sustain the glories of the stage were made by this gentleman. The “preparation” attendant on his revival of *King John*, and other plays of the great bard, were as much beyond the Macready mummeries so absurdly eulogised since, as one thing can be beyond another. It is a general impression that Mr. C. Kemble’s management would have been accompanied by far greater success, had he been satisfied with confining himself to that range of business, allotted to him by his predecessor, in which he never had an

equal; but in aspiring to be greater, he became less—his own opinion was not borne out by that of the public, and the exquisite beauties of his performance of *Cassio* were lost sight of in his misconception of the character of *Othello*.

The last three years of Mr. C. Kemble's rule were supported by the singular success of his highly gifted daughter, Mrs. Butler; but notwithstanding that important aid, he and his brother proprietors found out, that the calculations which led to the ejection of Mr. Harris, in 1822, were founded on a wrong basis, and that they were thoroughly incompetent to the management of such a concern: at the termination of the season 1831-32, they left the theatre involved, as they found it, in considerable difficulties. Apart from any injury the treasury may have suffered, through the vanity of the principal manager, it is impossible to withhold the praise so justly due for repeated and noble efforts made during this period of ten years; or to say that great talents, considerable property, and much attention were not contributed, by Messrs. Kemble, Willett, and Forbes, towards the support of this splendid building: but it was not to be done—neither the Drama nor the property were benefited one iota by these exertions, and the only one who *did* profit thereby, was—Mr. Charles Kemble; who, after the receipt of very profitable engagements in this country, went to America with his daughter, amassed much money there, returned, took leave of the stage, and subsided into the Examiner of Plays.



The late Mr. Elliston, for seven years lessee of Drury Lane theatre, knew as much of the stage, its capabilities, and its necessities, as any man that ever crossed it : and though he laboured under the disadvantage (as it always appeared to me in all such instances) of being an actor and a manager at the same time, yet his object was always the cultivation of his art. His fertile mind was ever on the rack of invention ; and he cared little about the exhibition of his own talent, great as it was on all hands admitted to be, so long as he could sustain the drama, and his treasury in connection with it. Mr. Elliston gave me my first appointment, as stage manager of Drury Lane theatre, in the year 1823 ; and in stating that season to be the most brilliant one ever known in this establishment, such a result is to be ascribed to his own indefatigability and tact. I was indebted to Mr. Elliston for acts of kindness, hours of social delight, and scenes that made them happy—I may have imbibed, and acted upon, many notions entertained by him, from my great admiration of his abilities, and therefore, in praising him, may appear as seeking to become my own advocate ; but such is not my aim. The fame of his brother professors was ever a great object of his care—he had the proper worship for true genius, the proper contempt for *pseudo-genius*, and he never gave a better proof of his discernment than one evening when, on entering the green-room, he was accosted in the most supercilious manner by a performer dressed for the character of *Rob Roy* (a

part the *histrion* deemed derogatory to his reputation although it was the making of it) with, "Pray, Mr. Elliston, when do we act Shakspeare?" and he pithily replied to this very magnificent three-tailed Bashaw, "When you can!"

If Mr. Elliston's personal views, or opinions, were somewhat inflated,\* (and his warmest admirers are willing to admit that many current anecdotes of him lead to the belief) they never interfered with the duties of his station. He was a man not only without prejudices, but above them. His acquirements were considerable, his knowledge extensive, but exercised at all times without prepossession. As an actor he stood in the very highest rank; and there are few playgoers who would not rather have witnessed any one scene of his performance than the combined efforts of every other professor whose interests he was ever so ready to advance. Drury Lane theatre should not have failed under the direction of so eminent a man; and although there are persons to be

\* Certain it is, that at the time (1824) the question of erecting a monument to Shakspeare, in his native town, was agitated by Mr. Mathews and myself; the King (George the Fourth) took a lively interest in the matter, and, considering that the leading people in both the patent theatres should be consulted, directed Sir Charles Long, Sir George Beaumont, and Sir Francis Freeling, to ascertain Elliston's sentiments on the subject. As soon as these distinguished individuals (who had come direct from, and were going direct back to the Palace) had delivered themselves of their mission, Elliston replied, "Very well, gentlemen, leave the papers with me, and *I will talk over the business with HIS MAJESTY.*"

found, who think Mr. Elliston overbuilt himself in his outlay at Leamington, and in his contraction and alteration of Drury Lane theatre, the more immediate cause of that failure may be traced to, or will at least be found mixed up with, the general apathy of the public.

It, however, becomes a duty to state, that Mr. Elliston, in one respect, laid the foundation of a system which has conduced to the destruction of the patent theatres (as they are now by courtesy called) to a greater extent than the act of any other individual has been able to achieve. In the season of 1821-22, Mr. Liston was engaged at Covent Garden theatre, on a weekly salary of 17*l.*, with an additional 7*l.* for his wife, and in a fit of discontent he sought from the proprietors a slight addition. Mr. Elliston having ascertained there was some hesitation in their according this addition, stepped forward, and offered him 50*l.* per week, which the comedian instantly accepted. Up to this period there had been an understanding between the two theatres, that no performer, engaged at one house, should be qualified to engage at the other, without undergoing a year's absence from the metropolis, and that the dramatic pieces produced at the one should not be represented at the other establishment. Mr. Elliston broke through both these understandings; first, by employing Mr. Liston, and then by bringing him forward in *Guy Mannering*, *Rob Roy*, &c., &c., dramas considered, by purchase

and general outlay on their original production, to belong to the rival theatre.

The *Rubicon* being thus passed, the legions of Cæsar followed their leader; and performers of all grades were soon found, seeking to double and treble the respectable incomes they had long been in the enjoyment of; or, failing in that endeavour, establishing a dynasty of their own. Based on this fatal speculation, the salaries of the present day have risen to the laughable pitch hereafter detailed—not only as much beyond precedent as beyond desert—but fraught with inexcusable folly, and irretrievable ruin to the speculator. I am quite willing to admit that, following up the good old intellectual proverb of

“ One fool makes many,

“ So the world does *contin*,”

I stand at the head of all such magnanimous blockheads, for having given the highest salary ever meted in these theatres, *viz.* 125*l.* per night, to the late Madame Malibran; a particular reference to which will be made hereafter.

But we shall look in vain again for such a man as Elliston. After having exhausted the purer resources of his judgment and research, he could fly to the practice of “the expedient,” of which he was a perfect master, and rely, for extrication from the difficulties in which it might involve him, on his irresistible fund of humour. In the height of his enthusiasm,

he might certainly be found indulging too freely in the marvellous—nay, the impossible—but he could retrieve his position by a retreat that to common minds would seem to partake of both of these qualities\*. The biographer of this extraordinary man (and it is

\* The mention of a circumstance connected with his management of the small theatre in the city of Worcester will illustrate the foregoing observation, though it is not held up as an argument in favour of such a system, nor as one at all calculated to enhance the respectability of such undertakings. Mr. Elliston had advertised for his benefit in that town, an extraordinary display of fire-works, comets with tails, and fixed stars without them—lions ravenous, and boa constrictors gorged—squibs, crackers, wheels and whirligigs, were to be seen in all the glory of the pyrotechnical art. Whether he had ever seriously contemplated their introduction, whether there was any difficulty in procuring them, or whether having assured himself, by their announcement, of a crowded auditory, this deponent sayeth not; but, *certainly*, they never “made their appearance on that stage.” Mr. Elliston persuaded his landlord, a man much respected in Worcester, to issue his fiat against any such exhibition, as calculated to vitiate his insurance, and to endanger the lives of the king’s subjects. The good easy man, falling into the trap, went to the theatre with a party chiefly to hear the manager’s explanation; when to his horror and astonishment, Elliston placed the entire onus on his shoulders, and called on him by name to verify his assertion, from the box he was sitting in, at the same time lauding him highly for his promptitude and precaution. He wound up his address in a tone of peculiar conciliation and bombast, which no other mortal could adopt, with, “BUT”—(as if at least he was going to give them all their money back again)—“BUT—Ladies and Gentlemen, I am happy to say, I have given directions “to make up for any disappointment you may have experienced “—BAND”-(looking down, and pointing his finger, with an assumption of great authority, to three wretched fiddlers in the orchestra)—“BAND, play up ‘GOD SAVE THE KING’—directly!”

: a matter of much astonishment, that no one has been found to take upon himself that character) would have matter for the most entertaining book that could be written. Mr. Hook is the writer who should do it—he knew him intimately, and one who can extract humour even out of dull *matériel*, would convulse his readers with the memoirs of such a life as this actor's. His biographer could not fail to allot him most of the qualifications necessary for the management of one of our large theatres, and would be unable to trace many errors in his administration that were not capable of being retrieved.

His habits to be sure had latterly become degenerate; but we are told by the almost divine prophet of our profession, that “misery makes us acquainted with strange bed-fellows;” and it certainly was the case with him—the life of a manager, however, which in its palmiest hours has misery enough to contend with, is in its days of adversity almost insupportable. Mr. Elliston left Drury Lane theatre the beautiful structure it now is, and bequeathed to the recollections of his surviving admirers the fame of having been one of

The old tabbies thanked him for his attention to the state of their nerves, while the younger branches of their families were disposed to believe and acquiesce in the propriety of every word he had uttered. The ignorant applauded him for the specious manner in which he had accounted for the omission of the particular amusement they had come to see, and the knowing ones roared outright at his ineffable impudence. The result was not merely exculpation, but enthusiastic approbation. There has been nothing like this since the days of Orpheus.

the most eminent performers that ever adorned it; of himself and those admirers, of the actor and the auditor, it may be justly said,

“Celui qui rit et celui qui fait rire sont deux  
“hommes fort différens.”

But what is the value, where is the *cui bono* of that brittle bauble, FAME? The sceptre he swayed so long has subsequently been wielded by far less worthy hands; the mansion he built, is tenanted by the stranger; some of his children are in a foreign land; many of the associates of his greatness and his giddiness have passed away before him; and he himself, “not old enough to die,” has long since set out on our last pilgrimage, to join, it is hoped, the amiable partner whose death had some time preceded his own.

Mr. Price succeeded Mr. Elliston, and in addition to the advantage of a long experience in stage matters, received as a bonus the sum of £2000, deposited in the hands of the committee by my friend Mr. Bish, who, on relinquishing his intention of becoming their lessee, generously gave up this sum to his successor.\*

\* The committee at first seemed bent upon compelling Mr. Bish to fulfil his agreement; which circumstance, coupled with the fact of his having a little before lost his seat in Parliament, on the ground of his being a contractor, gave rise to the following clever *jeu d'esprit*, told me at the time, without the name of the author:—

Mr. Price may be considered by his detractors as not having had a general knowledge of the London Stage, or a sufficient intimacy with the peculiarities of a London audience; yet it must be admitted that his management was characterised by spirit, by the selection of an excellent company, and by the appointment of able officers. If in a too sanguine moment he was tempted to do what turned out an error, he was ever ready with corresponding decision to redeem it—an observation exemplified by the fact of his having (at a period when a great dearth of talent prevailed and the revolution of the performers had begun) engaged Mr. Macready at a salary of 20*l.* per night. Finding however, that he did not individually attract as many shillings, that the plays in which he was compelled to introduce him possessed no magnetic qualities, except in the hands of such a genius as Mr. Kean, and that putting him into new plays only brought upon the treasury the additional burthen of authorship and outlay, without any corresponding return, he cancelled his engagement sixteen nights before its expiration, by paying him twenty times as many pounds—320*l.*! a tolerable sacrifice to get rid of a bad bargain.

Throughout his arduous career, Mr. Price made every possible effort to uphold the drama, as the

With his "Houses" Tom Bish has had luck, there 's no doubt of,  
 A luck which will soon make his cramm'd pockets thin;  
 When he 's *in-for* the House that he wants to be *out* of,  
 And *out* of the House that he wants to be *in*!



uniting Messrs. Kean and Young in tragedy, and Messrs. Liston and Mathews in comedy (not to name other enterprises), amply testify : but he subsequently counterbalanced all such praiseworthy performance, by becoming, since his secession from Drury Lane theatre, one of the most formidable enemies that the due cultivation of the drama in England has had to contend with. In his capacity of proprietor of the Park Theatre, New York, he has lured away to the shores of America every performer of any distinction, (and what is of equal importance—utility,) whom gold could tempt, or speculation seduce. He is perfectly right in so doing, and any man far less gifted with *vous* than he is, would have done the same ; but that does not alter the fact.

None but those who have experienced it can tell the inconvenience theatres of this magnitude suffer by the abduction of performers apparently of an inferior grade, who have enacted a given line of business for a series of years, and have thereby become the very movers of the machine. Accustomed to play nightly in every piece, and playing many parts in most of them, they are the chief reliance of a theatre in any of the numerous dilemmas in which circumstances involve it. In the same ratio they must be of the utmost importance to the transatlantic stage, and are worth any reasonable sum that can be given for them. It may appear ridiculous, on the first mention of it, but the secession of such utilitarians as

John Cooper,\* or the late octogenarian Powell, caused incalculable trouble for the time to the theatre in which they were engaged. From being habituated all their lives to the performance of the entire range of the drama, and being equally good, or bad as it may be, in one part as in another, they might be applied to in all times of difficulty; and from having a quick study in learning, and laying claim to the almost greater advantage of not forgetting, they might at all times be depended upon. Powell's faculty of retention in particular characters was so great, that all the blunders of those with whom he happened to perform, could never cause him to make a blunder himself. Whether he received a right cue from the speaker to whom he had to reply, or not, was to him a matter of perfect indifference—he would give the answer set down in the text, without deviating to the right, or to the left.† This is carrying utility to a great extreme, no doubt; but it exemplifies how far

\* He belonged to a class of actors to whom all passion or feeling comes alike, and who are admirably hit off in the "Familiar Epistles:"

"Would he display the greatest woe,

"He slaps his breast, and points his toe;

"Is merriment to be express'd,

"He points his toe, and slaps his breast!"

† A curious instance of this occurred some years ago, at the termination of the tragedy of *Richard the Third*. Mr. Ellistón was enacting the part of *Richmond*; and, having during the evening disobeyed the injunction which the King of Denmark lays down to his Queen, "*Gertrude, do not drink*," he accosted Mr. Powell, who was personating

the force of habit will go. Such men as these we cannot afford to lose; and when in addition to many of that class, Mr. Price, as stated, has from time to time transported nearly all the leading performers of the day, the usual difficulties attendant upon management at home have become of course thereby materially increased.

As the management of Mr. Macready will, in its proper place, require exclusive consideration, it were a task of supererogation to anatomize the merits or demerits of others who have at various times filled the managerial chairs of the two principal London Theatres. Their names, in some instances furnish testimony for the possession of superior abilities, and bear out the fact that, in their respective failures, the fault did not rest solely with themselves. It will be the province at all events of one of them, to inquire into causes, after having stated effects. Theatres, their directors, and all persons employed in them, are considered, by some people, public property

*Lord Stanley* (for the safety of whose son *Richmond* is naturally anxious) THUS, on his entry after the issue of the battle:—

ELLISTON (as *Richmond*). Your son, George Stanley, is he dead?

POWELL (as *Lord Stanley*). He is, my Lord, and *safe in Leicester town!*

ELLISTON (as *Richmond*). I mean,—ah!—is he missing?

POWELL (as *Lord Stanley*). He is, my Lord, and *safe in Leicester town!!*

And it is but justice to the memory of this punctilious veteran, to say, that he would have made the same reply to any question which could, at that particular moment, have been put to him.

to a much greater extent than they really are—neither the spectator nor the critic having actually any right to inquire into their doings, beyond an unprejudiced notice of what transpires before the curtain. The circulation of idle rumours, the assertion of ridiculous falsehoods, and the garbled statement of facts, indulged in by thousands, respecting the movements of the theatrical community, is more prejudicial to the cause of the drama and the character of its professors, than the inventors or promulgators can imagine, or are inclined to believe.

I have frequently taken up a newspaper, containing a column of gossip stated to be replete with “Dramatic intelligence,” in which there has not been one word of truth from the first to the last syllable—have read criticisms on performances that never took place, and heard discussions on the private characters of *artistes*, with whom the disputants had no acquaintance, and of whom they subsequently admitted that they had not the slightest knowledge. No other avocation, however public, is exposed to the same injurious and absurd practice, it is fair to presume, as there is none other so little regulated by any defined principle, or so generally unprotected by the laws which govern the rest of the world.

How long I may entertain my present feeling, it is not for me to determine; but I can conscientiously say, that when I vacated the managerial chair of Drury Lane theatre, I forcibly felt the truth of Sir Robert Walpole’s remark to his medical adviser, on

whom he had just conferred an essential favour. "Sir Robert!" said the Doctor, "I am as happy as if I was a King!"—"And I," rejoined Sir Robert, as he shook the Doctor cordially by the hand, "and I—as if I wasn't a Minister."

## CHAPTER II.

Indifference of the public to theatrical amusements—Advantages possessed by the Foreign stage—Consequent cultivation of the art—A few singers do not constitute an Opera—Difficulties under which the large theatres labour—Folly of reduced prices—Necessity of reduced salaries—Lord Chamberlain—Difference between authority and oppression—Sir E. L. Bulwer and the Marquis Conyngham—Licences to be had for asking—Hardship on the Haymarket theatre complained of by the manager to the public—The Duke of Sussex's opinion of the proper support of the London Stage.

IT will naturally be inferred, from several observations in the preceding chapter, that the principal cause of the failure of the two National Theatres is attributable rather to a want of patronage on the part of the public, than to any want of ability, or spirit, on the part of those who have hitherto had the management of them. There cannot, to speak generally, be a question of it. The magnitude of these buildings has very reasonably been urged as another cause, and such is the case; but that admission only resolves itself, as an additional reason, into the one grand point alluded to. Were there a possibility in

this country of maintaining and upholding Drury Lane and Covent Garden theatres, in the manner they ought to be maintained and upheld, there cannot be a doubt that the importance of the empire, and its character for profuse expenditure and liberal patronage, would justify the erection of two such dramatic temples. But we are an untheatrical people, and consequently when we support those establishments, it is not through any love of the art or profession practised within them, but from extraneous excitement held out to us as a temptation to enter them. We contribute nothing to the advancement of the drama, beyond the occasional price of admission to one or other of its arenas; we do not subscribe to the necessities of any of its professors, beyond the trifling sums collected annually at the Fund Dinners, to which, as visitors, we are rather attracted by the charms of a good dinner and subsequent entertainment, than by any great consideration for the more immediate object of those meetings.

Contrast the position of the principal theatres in most other countries with their station here, and little further argument will be necessary to prove what I have advanced. The character of the English people differs very materially from that of almost every other European power in this particular. The maintenance of a well conducted stage is a state affair with most continental cabinets: and when, in addition to the support derived from the respective governments, the general *animus* of the

people is taken into consideration, we cease to wonder that the foreign stage has produced such eminent *artistes*. I, for one, do not think it compatible with the disposition of this country, that its places of public entertainment should be upheld by any grant from Government, nor that any of the leading professors should figure on the Pension List; but it is nevertheless true, that if such were the case, we should not complain as we do, of the great dearth of dramatic talent. There are many to be found who would rather see a few thousands bestowed on the cultivation of the tragic muse, than squandered on the worthless inutilities of public pageantry; but the general sense of the people would decidedly be opposed to any such payments. In countries where this aid is given, the public feeling is of an essentially dramatic tendency. Take for example France, Italy, and Germany, as forming the most enlightened portion of Europe, and in all the principal cities—certainly in the capitals—of those dominions, this will be found to be the case.

In Paris, the *Académie Royale*, the *Théâtre Français*, the *Opéra Italien*, and the *Opéra Comique*, have each an allowance from the government. The first receives no less a sum, per annum, than 800,000 francs (32,000*l.*) and the gratuitous use of the theatre besides—an amount, taken together, equal to the ordinary receipts for an entire season at either of our principal theatres; and after a certain period of service, its leading performers have a handsome retiring pension from



the state, and their latter days are not subject to the limited means of a Theatrical Fund. With such a prospect as this before them, the parents of a promising child are induced to expend liberally on education, in those various branches of art and accomplishment, considered as necessary qualifications. With a knowledge that such brilliant and substantial result attends a successful career at these theatres, performers graduate in the provinces, until fit to compete for more permanent advantages. The inducement leads to the cultivation of the profession.

But it is not alone in the aid derived from the State, that the support of the drama on the continent is to be found. The public taste has a general theatrical direction, and there are few families who do not dedicate a sum, apportioned to their means, to the purpose of play-going. The production of a novelty has a paramount claim on their attention, and consequently the "first night" of any dramatic piece is an event of important celebration. It is this conviction that has led to the fertility of dramatic authorship on the continent; for there every species of scenic composition meets with encouragement. These arguments will probably be combated by a reference to the large sums of money expended in this country on the public talent we receive from abroad, or possess at home. But such argument is not to be maintained for one moment.

If some thousands, arising out of a liberal subscription, are paid by a director to some half dozen

performers whom the calls of fashion require to be in the metropolis at the height of the season, this does not, or should not, imply that their PROFESSION is liberally patronised. No one will be fool enough to argue that, because Mesdames Grisi, Persiani, and Garcia, with Rubini, Tamburini, and Lablache, receive these thousands, that we have a perfect Italian Opera in London. We have so many eminent Italian singers, but the *tout ensemble* is not there; and if either of these distinguished histrions chance to be ill, the Opera is accordingly shorn of its fair proportion. We have a quartett party of unsurpassed talent, if you like; but no Italian Opera. If you wish to see a perfect opera, go to Berlin, where there are three or four principal singers of every quality of voice, a profusion of second and third rate singers, and about one hundred and sixty chorus singers. The opera there consequently is perfect, for neither the airs nor the illness of any individual can compromise the perfection of the performance.

It will surely not be advanced, that, because Taglioni receives three or four thousand pounds for a few nights' dancing, Her Majesty's Theatre can boast of possessing a complete *Corps de Ballet*. Go to Paris, and you will (or rather would till lately) see Taglioni, the Elsslers, Duvernay, Noblet, Dupont, the secondary names of Pauline Leroux, Vagon, Fitz-James, Perrot, Mazillier, Montjoie, Carrés, &c. with numerous coryphées, and somewhere about one hundred *figurantes*. The distinction between our

cultivation of the Dramatic Art, and its support by our continental neighbours, is easily laid down. We expend so much money upon a few particular performers, regardless altogether of the combined effect ; while other countries expend the same sum for general, and not individual advancement. The foreign theatres, in which the performers just referred to appear, do not pay them for a year's service anything like the sum they receive here for a few weeks' exhibition ; but they lay out the difference in completing every other part of their company and their establishment, —the true and only method of adequately sustaining the art. If, by the attraction of an individual, the public enables a manager to meet the exorbitant demands of that individual, it is not to be maintained that the public is therefore dramatically disposed, and liberally encourages the drama.

Would the world have patronized one of Sir David Wilkie's "immortalities," if he had exhausted his genius upon any one given figure of a picture, and left the others a libel upon nature ? A scene upon the stage should be as perfect as any other work of art ; and if equally well supported, it undoubtedly would be. There have been exhibited on some of our minor boards tableaux almost as finished as art could make them ; but in such cases they have been materially assisted by the smallness of the scene of action. The size of Drury Lane and Covent Garden will amply sustain my general argument. The dignity of the nation required, it is presumed,

that two such mausoleums should be erected, but the taste of the nation will never be found adequate to their support, except for such a sepulchral service as the burial of the dramatic art. I have combined in the performance of a play by one of our oldest and ablest dramatists, the services of Messrs. Farren, Dowton, Power, Macready, Cooper, Harley, Miss E. Tree, and others, by which representation a nightly loss of 100*l.* has been incurred ; yet I have seen more than one of these worthy personages enact on a smaller stage, without any corresponding talent at their side, to almost as great a profit ! This is not supporting the drama, but is a contribution to the advancement of an individual, without the slightest regard to the general efficiency by which such individual ought to be surrounded. As long as the theatres of this country are matters of private speculation (and that will be as long as they are in existence), and as long as the public taste continues what it ever has been (and there is no changing the character of a people), so long will our drama be unprotected, and its two chief temples unsupported, except on particular occasions, arising from extraneous circumstances.

To keep up either of these theatres, without taking into calculation the services of a single performer, requires as great a nightly sum, as it does to maintain in a well equipped condition any one of the minor houses. Look alone at the difference of expenditure in *matériel* and mere manual labour ; and, passing from that calculation to the operations of the stage,

reflect on the number of persons required to fill up any outline on these vast arenas. It is one thing to complete such arrangements in a drawing room, and another upon Salisbury Plain, (the comparative dimensions of our minor and major theatres,) and for the entertainment of a public filling the one and deserting the other.

It may by some be argued that the prices of admission operate materially against the patent theatres; but it is as notorious as the demonstration of figures can make a thing, that the recent reduction which has taken place at both of them, has not been the means of increasing the receipt; nor (though held out as a very just reason for so doing) has it reduced the demands of the performers.\* In evidence of your Englishman not being a thorough play-goer, or supporter of the drama, it may be stated that he never regards the price of his entrance to a place of amusement; and more frequently than otherwise thinks the entertainment must be bad, if he has little to pay to see it. He goes so seldom, that when he does go, he will pay any thing in reason. A concert, as effective-

\* When a popular comedian, famous for acting *Sir Francis GRIPE* off as well as on the stage, was recently asked, one Saturday morning, by the manager of almost the smallest of our small theatres, in consequence of a run of very ill luck, to wait a little for his salary—which was 60*l.* a week!—he coolly took a chair, and replied, “Certainly—I’ll wait till it’s paid.” Yet this performer is no better, and no more attractive in that “little go,” with its low prices, than when playing in either of the patent houses, at their former scale of admission.

ly supported in the one place as the other, that they would only give a franc to see in Paris, thousands give a guinea, and seldom less than half-a-guinea, to be present at in London. That is fashion, not *taste* ; and so it is with our theatres. Make it the fashion, by any trickery or stratagem, to go to any given theatre, and people will flock there ; while another, replete with talent of the highest order, shall be altogether deserted. We may not like to hear these things of ourselves, or to confess their truth when we *do* hear them ; but they *are* truths nevertheless. On the continent it is another affair ; the price is a matter of serious discussion with those who are passionately fond of amusement, and go to some description or other of it almost nightly.

If the prices of admission had made the difference which some people imagine, the first adoption of their alteration would not merely have greatly increased the receipt of the larger houses, but would have been seriously detrimental to the exchequer of the minor theatres. The very reverse, however, has been the case in both points of view. The reduction recently made at Drury Lane and Covent Garden theatres has had no effect whatever upon the income of any other establishments, all of which appear to have a specific audience of their own : and certainly it has not bettered the condition of the experimentalists. Nothing but stern necessity, BASED UPON THE OPINIONS OF OTHER PEOPLE, should have induced me to commit the act to which I was a party in the season of 1836-37

—the lowering of the prices of Drury Lane theatre. I had successfully combated the experiment made by Mr. Osbaldiston at the rival theatre in the previous season ; but the temporary excitement created by the final retirement of Mr. Charles Kemble from the last scene of the glory of his gifted family, at the same prices demanded in the Strand to witness the inexhaustible *Punchiana* of mine excellent friend Mr. Yates, totally paralysed—or it was supposed they would do so—any efforts that could be made—at least in the proportion that seven shillings bear to five. I was compelled, therefore, to yield to the importunity of those whose incomes were mainly dependent on the nightly contribution of the public.

A performer's judgment, like his life, is entirely based upon "the expedient," and as long as he is secure for the moment, he entirely disregards any prospective advantage. He thinks but of the present hour, and has a thorough contempt for the future. He is for levelling every barrier opposed to his immediate wants or wishes, forgetful or ignorant of the permanent injury he may thereby inflict upon himself and his profession. Far be it from me to maintain that the talent of to-day is equally worth paying to see, as that which has preceded it ; but surely diminishing the amount of what you *do* pay to see, is a *primâ facie* diminution of the value of the commodity itself. It is not an unfair argument to use, that if the prices of admission be lowered from the standard at which they formerly were, the payments should un-

dergo a corresponding reduction; *id est*, if leading performers received 25*l.* a week, when the admission to the boxes was seven shillings, they ought to make a proportionate reduction, now that admission has descended to five shillings. Instead of that being the case, they have doubled and trebled their demands. Rents have gone down nearly one half; the very best and the very worst articles of consumption used in a theatre have suffered an equal falling off in their price; but performers, "not a twentieth part the tithe of" their predecessors, have raised the value of *their* commodity to this laughable excess. The only shadow of reason that can be advanced by these pretenders, is the knowledge they possess of the generally untheatrical character of their countrymen, and the consequent necessity, in their own opinions, of making hay while the sun is shining.

The most remarkable instance of absurdity manifested in the reduction of prices, as an inducement for people to visit a theatre, occurred at Drury Lane in the year 1818, when Mr. Kean's attraction, under very gross mismanagement certainly, had given way. The Committee, who at that time regulated affairs, made a considerable alteration in the terms of admission, and shortly afterwards produced the very clever hash of *Brutus*, the success of which was so great (and would have been equally so, whatever the people had to pay for seeing it), that a loss of some thousands was the result of the reduction. Through a very long experience I have never found, theatrically speaking, that



the price of the article at all interfered with the demand for it—the public is not to be deterred from going to the play because the admission to the boxes is 7*s.*, any more than it is to be attracted there, because the admission is only 5*s.* The quality of the *matériel*, and not the price, is the thing inquired into: *ergo*, again and again, I maintain we are an undramatic set of people.

In stating, however, that the principal cause of the repeated failures of the patent theatres is to be attributed to the apathy of the public, it is but just to enumerate some other causes which, though less potent, have materially hastened their downfall. To place these before the reader, in the hope of his arriving at the same conclusion with the writer, it will be advisable to divide them, under separate headings. The preceding chapter has been devoted principally to a recital of the mere fact of failure—we now come to reasons, and will terminate our task with examples.

The Lord Chamberlain's authority has done more injury to the patent theatres than it can ever retrieve. The successful opposition that was made in the years 1833 and 1834, against Sir E. Bulwer's bill for the annihilation of those establishments, by vesting in magistrates the power of erecting as many theatres as people thought proper to ask for, has subsequently been disposed of by the encroachments which have been sanctioned, and the privileges which have been given, far beyond any contemplated by that

liberal and destructive member. Notwithstanding that, at this period, His late Majesty was pleased to refuse the application made to him for the erection of a third theatre, yet at the subsequent accession of the Marquis Conyngham to office, that noble lord set patent and precedent at defiance, disposed of petitioners in the most summary manner, and acted upon the dogma of *Ego et rex meus* on the most extensive scale. The winter theatres had already suffered by the desertion of many of their principal performers to minor houses—a calamity which the Lord Chamberlain could have averted, notwithstanding the cupidity of the deserters, by restricting their performances exclusively to the class of entertainment formerly permitted in such theatres. This, however, did not appear to the noble Marquis half sweeping enough; and he accordingly commenced operations in downright earnest. Mr. Rayner,—who had erected a theatre in the Strand, had opened it in defiance of the law, had laughed to scorn the Duke of Devonshire, the then Lord Chamberlain, and had literally refused to obey in somewhat unceremonious terms the King's own commands to close it,—now received a formal licence from the Marquis Conyngham! The Haymarket theatre, which from a licence of four months had jumped into one of eight, now obtained an extension of two more, and by virtue thereof has completed two SEASONS OF TEN MONTHS EACH! Foote and Colman, who were limited to about 104 nights, must be looked upon as two “very ill-used gentlemen,” and

would undoubtedly have considered themselves as such could they but have "revisited the glimpses of the moon" or rather the footlights, and heard the present manager of the Haymarket complain of being compelled to cut short a season that had already extended to the unprecedented length of 250 nights\*! The Noble Marquis, not satisfied with this, extended the annual licences of the English Opera House, the Adelphi, and the Olympic theatres, as also the one he had recently given to the Strand theatre; gave a licence (and subsequently extended it) to Mr. Braham's new theatre, sanctioned the Opera Buffa (a minor Italian Opera House), and subsequently Promenade

\* Fact! *ecce signum*: "Ladies and Gentlemen, this being the last night I am allowed by my licence to keep this theatre open, it becomes my duty to express to you my heartfelt gratitude for the many favours I have received at your hands. I confess I am somewhat slow to understand why an Establishment, so exclusively devoted to the purest style of dramatic entertainment as this is, and always has been, should be obliged to close in the very heart of the most festive season of the year; still to the decision of my superiors I submissively bow, and humbly hope that ere long *such restrictions will be removed*. The distinguished patronage bestowed upon our exertions to please you, even to the highest in the realm, and of which I feel justly proud, has enabled me, at the close of each successive season since I have had the honour of catering for your amusement, to thank you for unceasing success. And now, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have to reiterate those thanks a hundred fold for one of the most prosperous seasons ever known within these walls—a season unprecedented in length, *within the jurisdiction of THE LORD CHAMBERLAIN*, having extended to 250 nights!!!" —*Commencement of Mr. Webster's Speech on the Haymarket Stage last January.*

Concerts at the Lyceum in the winter months; gave extra favours to the King's theatre; and when, (after the ordinary representations of the patent theatres were rendered utterly ineffective, and consequently unattractive, by the secession of most of their eminent artistes, who flocked to these minor concerns so highly favoured, their managers were compelled to resort to foreign entertainments literally to keep their doors open,) the same Lord Chamberlain strictly prohibited the performance of any but English pieces on the boards of Drury Lane and Covent Garden, in the face of all precedent, and the authority of His Majesty's Royal predecessors.

" You take my house, when you do take the prop

" That doth sustain my house,"

is a doctrine, which, though advanced by Shakspeare, was treated with contempt by the Marquis Conyngham. But there are very few instances of conduct that take place in this world for which there are not to be found exculpators. The noble lord in question, has, at least, fallen in with ONE approver; for at the dinner which the sycophants who buz about Mr. Macready gave to that performer in July last, H. R. H. the Duke of Sussex toasted Lord Conyngham's health, and directed the attention of his hearers to " the assistance the Noble Marquis had invariably rendered the patent theatres, during the period he was Lord Chamberlain !!! " His Royal Highness might just as well have said, that the Noble Ex-Cham-

berlain had supported them out of his private fortune.

The rejection of Sir E. Bulwer's bill, in two successive sessions by the House of Lords, and the positive refusal of His Majesty to grant his licence for a third theatre, would, it was natural to suppose, have had some weight with the Lord Chamberlain. It might have led his lordship to the belief that, as the theatres then in existence could not obtain adequate support, it was not likely that the erection of half-a-dozen more would be conducive to any happier result. It might have convinced him that, if the theatres then open were deserted, the country itself must be untheatrically disposed, and that the erection of any others was not calculated to change the disposition of a whole people. It might have convinced his lordship of a great many more things, but his lordship was not to *be* convinced.

There are persons to be found who think the Marquis Conyngham cared no more for the welfare of the patent theatres, while he was *in* office, than he does now he is *out* of it. No other result than the driving one nail more into the coffins of these buildings could have reasonably been anticipated, and no other result has been brought about.\* Yet in the

\* Were there no other consequence resulting from this "throwing open the trade," the simple fact of its having destroyed all the provincial dramatic nurseries for talent would be quite sufficient. The manager of either leading London theatre might, some few years since, rely upon a trip to Bath, York, or Dublin—not to mention smaller

spirit of liberalism stalking over the land, it was deemed necessary, no doubt, to assail one species of institution as well as another, and the outcry of MONOPOLY which every one was willing to raise, without in the slightest degree understanding its purport, was to be silenced by concession. The encroachments upon the rights of the Theatres Royal were of very slight importance, merely as respected the performances understood to be their exclusive prerogative. Any representation of *Macbeth* at the Olympic, the *School for Scandal* at the Adelphi, or *Hamlet* at the Surrey, as long as they were sustained by the stock companies of those respective establishments, could do no possible injury to the major houses. But the matter assumed a very different aspect, when, by enacting such pieces, the managers were enabled to wean away performers of eminence from the fountain head, and exhibit them at reduced prices of admission. The public not being a dramatic public, not caring a fig how the piece was sustained throughout as long as they could see a leading actor

places—being repaid by the engagement of some performer of consequence; but now they no sooner make their début on a country stage, than, regardless of any proficiency in their profession, they greedily accept the few shillings more proposed by some metropolitan minor establishment, play a short time in London, and then have the impudence to “skim the country round,” under the facetious denomination of STARS,

“And prove, to visual demonstration,

“The justice of their reputation!!!”

in the principal part, would naturally rather pay 4*s.* to see Mr. Kean in a theatre nearer their own homes than 7*s.* to see him in Drury Lane theatre ; but could they have seen him, as formerly, no where else than on those boards, they would gladly, as formerly, have paid the 7*s.*

Look at another result of this state of things. The lessee of a minor theatre, having very small salaries to pay to the bulk of his company, can easily afford to give a thumping one to some two or three self-styled Stars, and the weekly stipend with which they used to be contented from the larger houses is therefore treated with contempt. An actor who can get 20*l.* per *night* from the manager of a small theatre instead of the 20*l.* per *week* he has been in the habit of receiving from the larger houses, thinks more of his purse than his profession, and makes his choice accordingly. For a great portion of the calamities thus inflicted upon these doomed dominions of the drama, the Lord Chamberlain has to answer. As I shall have in its proper place to enter more fully upon the position this distinguished officer holds with reference to the stage, it will be unnecessary to enlarge upon it here.

The observations thus far made have been laid down with the view of maintaining the main argument, the *generally undramatic character of the country* ; and how that argument has been borne out by the proceedings of the Lord Chamberlain. The *animus* of the people must be as well known to that function-

ary, as to any other observer, and should act as a guide to him in the despotism he is permitted to exercise over dramatic affairs. Had his lordship directed his attention to the perpetual violation of the spirit of his licences committed in minor theatres, whereby so many leading performers in the profession have been tempted to their boards,—had he confined their seasons to the limit he found them enjoying on his entry into office, and at the same time had he borne out to their fullest extent the privileges handed down in the patents of Drury Lane and Covent Garden theatres—they might still have possessed the talent diffused in so many other directions, and his lordship have been justly “toasted” as their protector and supporter. He would then have done the utmost in his power to make up for that want of patronage complained of, arising solely from the untheatrical tendency of the character of the people. Whereas to that fatal bar to any permanent profit in those ill-fated houses, he superadded the authority of his high office with ill-directed taste and judgment, “perplexed them in the extreme,” and overloaded them with increasing difficulties. His lordship evinced the same degree of apathy for the well-doing of the drama which stamps the disposition of the public at large, and it has mainly contributed to the general issue.

I entertain as much respect for constituted authority as any of my fellow-citizens; but I have yet to learn why, if that authority be exercised to the



prejudice of the profession to which I belong, I am not to complain of the injury. When the duties of Lord Chamberlain were vested, as at the commencement of my lesseeship, in the hands of His Grace the Duke of Devonshire, the acknowledged taste of that enlightened nobleman was a guarantee for the due protection of vested rights, and for the countenance of all those embarked in the perilous task of maintaining them; but the government of the Marquis Conyngham, inasmuch as it trampled upon the privileges which his predecessors had upheld, and sanctioned alarming innovations, is not entitled to any such admission, despite the eulogium of H. R. H. the Duke of Sussex.

## CHAPTER III.

\* Performers and their salaries, past and present—Their deportment under different circumstances—The article of engagement of a leading actor, and its mutual advantages—Consequences of befriending a performer—James Smith and the Zoological Gardens—Horses and Actors, managed by old Astley—Cox *versus* Kean—Singular letter—Salaries of Mathews, Munden, Fawcett, Quick, Edwin, Irish Johnstone, C. Kemble, Macready, Ellen Tree, compared with those of Farren, Liston, Power, George Cooke, John Kemble, Mrs. Jordan—Different notions of comfort—Actors the destruction of dramatic literature—Knowles—Bulwer—Colman—Inchbald—Morton—Reynolds, &c.

HAVING adduced, in addition to the general indifference of the public, some other reasons for the repeated failures of our national theatres, I shall devote the present chapter to a consideration of a further cause, as potent as any that can possibly be advanced; and one of a more powerful nature, inasmuch as it proceeds from the very parties who should sustain, not depress, the source from which their reputation and consequently their livelihood has sprung—THE PERFORMERS! Her Majesty's dominions do not contain a funnier set of people than actors, a great portion of whom are

styled, by courtesy, Her Majesty's servants. Their avocation, to be sure, is drollery, and if it were confined to its proper place—the stage—we should have no cause of complaint; but that is the very last place where they seek to be amusing. If a man who has dealings with them will but call into his aid a sufficient degree of philosophy (of course he will stand in need of more than an ordinary quantity), he will find them the most diverting set of creatures in existence; and when he has exhausted all the patience at his command, he will find them something else. Taken as a body, and standing apart, as they do, from the rest of the community, they must be judged by rules of their own creation, to be understood; but if examined upon the principles that regulate society at large, they are altogether unintelligible. They are the most obsequious, and yet the most independent set of people upon earth—their very vitality is based upon “the weakest of all weakness—vanity,”—almost every sentiment put in their mouths is at variance with every action of their lives—their whole existence is an anomaly. The feverish state of excitement upon which their fortunes depend is a perpetual drawback to any exercise of the judgment they are supposed to possess. Their occupations bring them for ever before a tribunal, whose opinion, being decisive for the moment, induces them to mistake temporary approbation for permanent respect, without once referring to circumstances. They virtually serve two masters

—their employer *behind* the curtain, and the spectator *before* it; but upon the established principle of not being in reality able to serve both at one time, they select, in all cases of emergency, the one they deem the most powerful—*vox populi* is with them *vox Dei*. That mysterious line of light across the stage, (yclept in theatrical phraseology the float) through whose rays such a false colouring is for the most part given, appears to them to establish a stronghold of their own, which may set at defiance any other upon earth. The framer of our language must have had a performer in his eye, when he compiled the word—**SELF**! for performers never think of any thing else. Compliant beyond measure when seeking engagements, insolent in the extreme when they have once obtained them, and in the exercise of the duties belonging to them, they verify that couplet of Churchill at every turn,

“ On this great stage, the world, no monarch e’er

“ Was half so haughty as a monarch-play’r.”

The dramatic literature of the country, for any neglect of which a manager is at all times uncere-  
moniously belaboured, lies entirely at their mercy—the feelings of an author are solely dependent upon their disposition—the welfare of the theatre they are bound to is balanced upon their pleasure. In all this **SELF** is the mighty ruler—**SELF** the predominant feature. An actor, who from his peculiar position has the power, will sometimes bind down his employer by an article of engagement, that renders the very opening

of the doors almost a personal favour on his part.\* If you fulfil such article, you injure the profession at large, and every other member of it; if you do not, you injure him—at all events in his own opinion.

\* As an article of this description is a theatrical curiosity, I sub-join the copy of one:—

“Memorandum of agreement between Alfred Bunn, lessee of the Theatres Royal, Drury Lane and Covent Garden, and William Farren, of Brompton Square.

“That said Alfred Bunn shall engage said William Farren, to perform at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane [*not BOTH theatres, mark ye!*] from 1st October next, to the 30th June, 1835.”—SELF!

“The said William Farren to receive a salary of 30*l.* per week during such period, to be paid by the said Alfred Bunn, or his treasurer, on the Saturday of every week, during office hours, excepting twelve nights in Lent and the Passion Week, when such salary shall be reduced to 20*l.* per week, and for the Passion Week the said William Farren to receive no salary.” [*Though the theatre is closed by law on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, the 30th January, and Whitsun Eve, the said William Farren to be paid salary for those days.*].—SELF!!

“That a night shall be set apart for the benefit of the said William Farren, on which occasion he shall be allowed the choice of any performers engaged in either Covent Garden or Drury Lane theatres, on paying the charges of 210*l.*—to have that benefit early, and a choice of night.”—SELF!!!

“That said William Farren shall be entitled to write three double box and three double gallery orders on every night of dramatic performance.” [*Whether a brother performer's benefit, a royal visit, or any other great attraction.*].—SELF!!!!

“That said William Farren shall, during such mentioned period, attend rehearsals, and rehearse and perform on the stage of Drury Lane theatre whenever he shall be required so to do, the said several characters set forth in the schedule herein, and all others as

Clamorous as a hungry dog until you place him favourably and perpetually before the public, the moment you do so, he complains of being overworked. Examine well an actor standing at the wings previous to his going on the stage, and then the moment he is on it; examine him on his own quarter-deck, the Green-Room, and then examine him in the Freemasons' Hall, at his annual fund dinner, and you will need no further comment. He will upbraid, in unmeasured terms, for some imaginary undervaluation of his sublime qualities, the very people before whom he is found in five minutes afterwards bowing with pro-

"shall be cast and allotted to him (save and except such characters as said William Farren may deem unsuited to his talents, or prejudicial to his theatrical reputation)."—[*The poor devil of a manager to have no opinion whatever of his own.*]**—SELF!!!!**

"That none of the characters set forth in the schedule, viz. *Don Manuel, Moneytrap, Don Cæsar, Sir Francis Gripe, Dogberry, Old Dornton, Lord Priory, Sir Peter Teazle, Lord Ogleby, Sir Anthony Absolute, Sir Abel Handy, Sir Harry Sycamore*, shall be performed on the stage of Drury Lane, except in case of illness, by any other performer now engaged at said theatre, except said William Farren." [*So Downton, and other actors of eminence, were never to appear before the public in any of their favourite characters.*]**—SELF!!!!!!**

"That said William Farren shall have leave of absence on such and such days."**—SELF!!!!!!**

"That said Alfred Bunn shall engage H. E. Faucit, at a nightly salary of 1*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*, &c.; and that the said parties, bind themselves each to the other for the performance of this agreement in the sum of 1,000*l.*, as agreed and liquidated damages."**—SELF, SELF, SELF**, multiplied through every variety!

N. B.—The reader shall have a spice of Mr. Macready in the "article" line, by-and-by.

found humility; and he will turn up his nose behind the scenes at a gentleman whom over the festive board he will most respectfully solicit for a contribution to his favourite, his only charity!

A question may very naturally be put to a manager, "Then why do you engage such and such trouble-some performers?" If you do not, you have that small portion of the town, the playgoing part (and especially those who patronize the *PLAY* but not the *PAY*), arrayed against you. Whatever partizans such performers may have attached to the press immediately espouse their cause; and you, moreover, have to contend against the apprehension of their being engaged in other establishments, and the distribution of the stock business becoming thereby deranged. Call an actor or an actress to the reading of a new play, and when it is over you will hear in every direction, from those who do not happen to have "a good part" in it, that the play must inevitably be damned; don't call them, and they'll swear there is not a single "good part in it." *SELF, encore.* Become, in your managerial capacity the patron of a player, bring before the public the talent you believe to be in him, encourage it by an increase of salary, countenance it by attention, courtesy, and occasional privilege, and the very moment an opportunity presents itself, he will be the first to turn upon you. In any case of difficulty, he of all others is the last to be relied upon. Be on terms of friendship with him *out* of the theatre, and he expects you to carry those terms *into* it, and to

sacrifice the entire establishment on the altar of his conceit. To rule at all, you must rule with a rod of iron, and be consequently subject to all the contumely that the rigid exaction of duty invariably entails. An actor's position is very seldom obtained by education, by study, and preparation. In nine cases out of ten he has tried his hand at some honest trade, in which neither vanity nor idleness can be indulged, and having failed or being disgusted, as a *dernier ressort* he flies to the stage, without possessing any of the qualifications considered essential to the perfection of the *ars dramatica*. Initiated once into the mysteries of a London theatre, there are no bounds to the inordinate ambition and exorbitant demands of these good people. With four distinct mediums of emolument—*viz.*: weekly salary, annual benefit, provincial engagements, and theatrical fund dinners, some of them in the receipt of larger incomes than a minister of state, and most far better paid than those whose works they attempt to illustrate, still your London actor generally looks upon himself as a very ill-treated sort of personage.

I recollect, some time since, meeting James Smith\*, who drily said to me, "I have just come from the Zoological Gardens, and have seen a most extraordinary animal there." "What?" asked I.—"An actor without a grievance, and it wasn't Macready,

\* One of the authors of the *Rejected Addresses*; deceased, I regret to say, since this was written.



“ though he lives in the neighbourhood,” was his reply.

The very bearing which actors are permitted to assume in this country proves that the nation itself is not dramatically disposed. For a third part of the enormities they commit here, they would be committed in other countries; and for one fraction of the attempts they make to ride rough-shod over a manager, and jeopardise the intellect of an author, they would be “ cabin’d, cribbed, confined,” in the *Conciergerie* nearest to the scene of action. When the elder Mr. Harris was once complaining of a particular performer to old Astley, the equestrian, he replied, “ Why don’t you do with your performers, as I do with mine? Never let ’m have anything to eat, ’till they ’ve done acting!” It would, perhaps, be a somewhat dangerous experiment to tell *Macbeth* he must not have his rumpsteak until he was killed, or to apprise *Sir Peter Teazle* that he would not be allowed to take a glass of wine until the fifth act of the *School for Scandal* was over. Nevertheless it is a humorous idea, and proceeded from a very shrewd, though a very eccentric personage.

But the *ne plus ultra* of the pretensions of performers has within the last few years been arrived at, by the alteration they have thought proper to make in the scale of their emoluments. This, added to other causes and probably taking the lead of them all, will sooner or later entirely close the doors of the two

large theatres. To such an alarming pitch indeed has their cupidity reached, that it threatens the very safety of those houses from day to day, and demands especial notice at the hands of one who has suffered so much from it. If the talent of the individuals making such outrageous demands were far beyond that of their predecessors who were content with so much less; if theatres were in a most prosperous condition, the commodities of life risen in price, and the general expenditure to which performers are subject higher than it was ever known—or if the principal parties in question were individually attractive, there might be some reasonable ground for such pretensions; but the very reverse of all this is the case. Figures, however, lead to facts by a much nearer road than argument, and it will be best therefore first to deal with them.

In the year 1814, Mr. Kean, who was putting into the Drury Lane treasury a nightly average of 484*l.*, as set down in the first chapter, was content after his success was established, to sign an engagement for three years, at 8*l.*, 9*l.*, and 10*l.*, per week. He considered the committee acted with singular liberality in cancelling that article, and substituting one for 20*l.* per week, as some compensation for his great attraction. On the termination of this agreement, Mr. Kean stipulated for, and received, to the close of his career, the sum of 50*l.*, *per NIGHT*! A case of more inconsistent absurdity than this cannot possibly be cited; inasmuch as at the time he was literally caus-

ing the theatre to overflow nightly by his exertions, he was content with 20*l.*, per week ; but when his attraction subsided, and Drury Lane frequently presented to his performance "a beggarly account of empty boxes," nothing less than TEN TIMES THAT SUM (supposing him to play but four times a week) would be accepted. I have before me the treaty he concluded with Mr. Price, dated the 31st December, 1826, on his return from a second engagement in the United States,\* wherein he stipulated for half a clear bene-

\* To which he was driven by the result of the trial of *Cox versus KEAN*, which vitally stabbed his reputation, unnerved his energies, and led to that last *liaison* his friends so much regretted. While at his seat, in the Isle of Bute, with the degraded object of it, his secretary, Mr. Phillips (the respected father of the respected singer, Mr. H. Phillips), observing that he was likely to be fleeced not only of his money, but of the valuable mementos of his reputation which so many admirers had contributed, remonstrated with the woman; who so grossly insulted him, that, perceiving the influence she had over Kean, he resolved on leaving his house. Going to a neighbouring inn to take the first coach, he thence despatched a letter detailing his grievance to the tragedian, from whom he received the following answer—so beautiful, so melancholy, so peculiar, that it is a curiosity worth preserving :—

" DR. PHILLIPS,

" I am shocked, but not surprised. In error I was born, in error I have lived, in error I shall die. That a gentleman should be insulted under my roof creates a blush I shall carry with me to my grave; and that you are so, in every sense of the word, is unquestionable; from education, habits, and manners. It is too true that I have fostered a worm until it has become a viper. But my guilt is on my head. Farewell !

" Your's,

ED. KEAN."

fit, IN ADDITION to 50*l.*, per night, for twelve nights' performance.

If, however, such a deviation from the long established regulations of the London theatres could be justified, it would be in this instance; for, except under singular circumstances, there was always some attraction in Mr. Kean; he was a child of genius, a great, an original actor, "Hyperion to a Satyr" when compared to the pretenders who imagine they have succeeded him.

In the season of 1821-22, Mr. Charles Young had a *weekly* salary of 20*l.*, at Covent Garden Theatre, and in the following year he had a *nightly* one of the same amount at Drury Lane; a scale of remuneration according to which he was paid, until his retirement from the stage. In the very height of their popularity such actors as Munden, Fawcett, Quick, Edwin, Irish Johnstone, &c., had 14*l.* a week; Lewis, as actor and manager, 20*l.* per week, and in January 1812 Mathews,\* *the* Mathews, the most

\* This eminent performer and capital fellow was a rare exception to most others of his craft. Nothing could ever induce him to make an engagement that he did not think would be mutually advantageous. On this subject, the following delicious letter, in reply to an offer I made him to go to Dublin, is entitled to especial commemoration:—

" *Kentish Town, March 5, 1828.*

" DEAR BUNN,

" If you have not heard of what I have said on the subject of acting in Dublin, there is nothing surprising in your offering an engagement; if you have, you must have a contempt for me, and

extraordinary actor that ever lived, says, in a letter to Mrs. Mathews on the subject of a proposed engagement at Covent Garden Theatre—"Now to my offer, which I think STUPENDOUS AND MAGNIFI-

my consistency. Perhaps you have heard of my oath relative to that subject—perhaps you have heard of Liston's ('twas a joint oath)—and exclaim "Dicers oaths," and should we break our oaths again exclaim, "at actors' perjuries Bunn laughs." I shall not attempt to influence Liston, nor remind him, *à la Lady Macbeth*, "had I so sworn"—but not the persuasive pen of A. Bunn, nor reward nor the greatest terms ever offered to mortal actor, shall ever induce me to present myself again to a Dublin audience. This I have invariably said, whenever I have been solicited to visit the country; and therefore the offer being treated with contempt cannot apply personally to you. I shall not trouble you with my various reasons for this determination; but I never liked Ireland,—Ireland never liked or understood me. I do not *hate* them for this, but I thoroughly hate them for their want of appreciation of Liston. We acted there together often—not the last engagement. They would not smile at him—they broke his heart; and he is a mean hound if he allows them to annoy him again. Never more shall they insult me. Remember Tonson—"Off, off—Talbot, Talbot"—the cut-throat, malignant, doubly-distilled essence of all vulgarity in the shape of slang still wrings in my ears. They hooted me from their stage; and but for Abbott's sake I had left with the gratification of expressing my contempt for an audience who could calmly 'gape on,' and see a hired party of College and other ruffians, drive a London actor from the Dublin stage unheard, untried, for the crime of having selected for his opening part, a character that had been acted by one of their own favourites. Pray observe, I was hooted before I had delivered ONE line of the author. If ever I forget, or forgive it, may—but I *have* sworn. Now in a commercial point of view. A few people who would not pay—"theatrical varlets," have lied to you, as they did to poor Abbott, whom they ruined, that I should bring you money.

"CENT—17*l.* per week." John Kemble, for acting and managing, had a weekly salary of 36*l.*; Miss O'Neil's salary, at the beginning of her brilliant career, was 15*l.*, and never exceeded 25*l.* per week; George

They lie! they lie! I never brought money in Dublin. I can prove it to you. They have a habit of exaggerating—they cannot help it. One of the fools who would have told me that his father's present house was only a wing of the one he intended to build, actually had the audacity to say to me, "sure you done iligantly the last time you were in Dublin?" Very, said I. I received six shillings for my share of the house the first night, and not a far-thing for the second and third. I played several nights for nothing, and in nine nights, including the benefit, received 130*l.*—went across the water to a civilized country, and in one night at Liverpool I cleared—200*l.*!!! fact, "alone I did it." Can it be endured with patience then, that I should meet Pat after Pat, to swear to me I am always successful? You believe them: they deceive you—they deceive themselves. I NEVER brought money in Dublin—Braham did—Kean has—Vestris—not me—Stephens, not I—I NEVER (by G—d) played to one FULL house in Dublin, but once, in Crow Street; and then they knocked down the door-keepers and got in for nothing. 289*l.*, was returned for the greatest number of people ever collected in the building, so Jones said. Therefore do not lament me, or Liston, who would have got less than me, had he not secured 10*l.*, per night certain. Console yourself, Bunny, and believe me when I say that in paying us you would have been a loser; and believe me also when I say I never will act in Dublin again as long as I live.

Thine, my dear Bunny,

Very truly,—

C. MATHEWS."

This does not exactly tally with his account at page 145 of the Second Volume of Mrs. Mathews's biography; but no matter.

Cooke (greatly attractive) had 20*l.* per week ; Mrs. Jordan's salary, in the zenith of her popularity, was 81*l.* 10*s.* per week ; Mr. Charles Kemble, until he became his own manager, never had more than 20*l.* per week ; Dowton had 12*l.*, and never more than 20*l.* per week. Up to 1822 (and during the greater part of her career to that period she was highly attractive), Miss Stephens (the present Dowager Countess of Essex) had 20*l.* per week ; but in the following season at Drury Lane, she was paid at the rate of 60*l.* per week. In 1822, Mr. Macready had 20*l.* per week ; in 1832, and up to 1837 (barring an interregnum alluded to in a preceding chapter), he had 30*l.* per week, and in 1839 he had the modesty to demand, and to receive 25*l.* *per* NIGHT. In 1832, Mr. Power had 20*l.* per week ; he is now, and for some time past has been, in the receipt of 120*l.* per week. In 1822, Mr. Farren had 16*l.* per week ; in 1832, 30*l.* per week, and at present receives 40*l.* per week. In 1822, Mr. Liston had 17*l.* per week ; he then sprung up to 50*l.* and 60*l.* per week, and finally had 20*l.* per night. Miss Ellen Tree, when engaged with me to play at both theatres, and eventually only at one, had 15*l.* per week ; she went to America, stayed there two seasons, and returned to stipulate for, and to receive, 25*l.* per night.

There are many other instances that might be quoted, but facts enough have been adduced to found argument upon. Exceptions and allowances are always to be made, or at least are expected to be

made, in cases of individual attraction, though I have mentioned several where no such exception has been entertained; but the better way is to argue the matter generally:—for example,

Is Mr. Farren a better actor than Mr. Munden was, and is he *per se* more attractive? Decidedly neither! Upon what principle then is Farren to receive 40*l.* per week, when Munden only received 14*l.*? Suppose some blockheads are to be found who maintain that Farren *is* the better actor—at all events he can't be 26*l.* a week better! The joke, originating in Farren himself, of his being “the only salmon “in the market” and consequently worth so much more per lb., cannot be borne out, for people would very soon get sick of salmon, as Farren knows they have been, when it has been stuffed down their throats, day after day. Again,

Is Mr. Macready, who was paid the very high salary of 30*l.* per week a year or two since, entitled to the outrageous sum of 25*l.* per night, without being one jot more attractive, and not at all better as an actor? in the face, too, of Mr. John Kemble—a mountain to a molehill by comparison; having only had for the joint labours of acting and managing, 36*l.* per week, when he was drawing all the town after him; and, also, with the known fact of George Cooke's latest weekly salary not exceeding 20*l.* per week?—or,

Was Mr. Charles Kemble (who, under the salutary management of Mr. Henry Harris to the end of



the season 1821-22 received 20*l.* per week, and subsequently under his own management 30*l.* per week) entitled to demand on his return from America\* the extravagant sum of 20*l.* per night? Was Mr. Charles Kemble's attraction, until within the last few weeks of his retirement from the stage, sufficient to warrant such an extraordinary claim? or had his administration of the affairs of Covent Garden theatre been such, as to justify a concession to so exorbitant a request? Then,

Is any bold enough to say, that Mr. Power is a better actor than the late Mr. Johnstone? I think not: at the same time I cannot deny that Power is individually attractive, and that great consideration should accordingly be made; but if Irish Johnstone had 14*l.* per week, and Power has 120*l.* per week, surely no one will be found sufficiently hardy to assert that there is the difference of 106*l.* per week in their relative abilities. That Power is irresistibly funny, there is no denial; but not, by Jupiter Ammon, to this amount and difference. Then again,

If Miss Ellen Tree had the very handsome salary of 15*l.* per week, at the period of her quitting this country for the United States, has her absence so improved her performance,\* or do so many more people

\* It is a droll circumstance, worth recording, that the principal performers who have returned from America (in which country their abilities were more likely to retrograde than improve) have invariably alleged their return as a reason for increasing their demands.

go to see her than formerly, as to entitle her to the sum of 25*l.* per night. In the event of her playing six consecutive nights, she would at this rate receive 150*l.* per week, yet the unapproachable Mrs. Jordan never received more than 31*l.* 10*s.* per week. If therefore, there appears a difference in their respective salaries of 118*l.* 10*s.* per week, few persons will deny that it should not have been in favour of that exquisite actress, Mrs. Jordan. Again,

If, in the instance of Mr. Charles Kean, who in 1832 had 30*l.* per week, and since had 50*l.* per night, there may be some allowance made, because he unquestionably drew a considerable nightly sum to the treasury of the theatre he was engaged in—and we may ask, with Butler,

“ For what is worth in any thing,  
But so much money as 'twill bring ?”

—still the payment, for more reasons than one, is greatly in excess.

Then, to think while such actors as Emery had 12*l.* per week, Incledon 12*l.* John Bannister 18*l.* H. Johnston 10*l.*, &c., that Bartley should ever have had 20*l.* per week, that Templeton, who had 6*l.*, should now demand 30*l.* and refuse 25*l.*, that Harley should have had 20*l.*, Cooper\* 18*l.*, &c., is

\* Boileau has left a couplet particularly recommended to the consideration and study of this well paid and learned performer :—

“ Ce monde est plein de fous, et qui n'en veut pas voir,  
“ Doit se renfermer seul, et casser son miroir !”

enough to astonish, and make one downright sick. If the difference, therefore, between what such performers *have* received, and *ought* to have received, were to be itemed, and added up, it would go much more than half way towards the losses of any season, by which they have been such gainers, and their employers such losers.

The result, however, of their presumption has not been visited on managers alone, but on another class of persons, to whom they are equally, if not more indebted, for having been in a situation to exercise such presumption. I allude to dramatic authors, very few of whom the stage can now boast of. Within the last fifty years, and until within the last twenty, these gentlemen were enabled to obtain a comfortable\* living, and by virtue thereof, contributed to the amusement of the public, the benefit of the performers and managers, and the general advancement of the drama. The late George Colman received 1000*l.* for the comedy of *John Bull*, which averaged a receipt of 470*l.* a night for forty-seven nights, and realised a profit of 10,000*l.*; Mr. Morton received 1000*l.* for *Town and Country*; Mrs. Inchbald re-

\* Some people's notions of comfort differ, to be sure, from those of others. I went once with Mr. Mathews over Warwick Gaol, and when we came to "the place of execution," he observed to the gaoler that, considering the extent of the county and the number of executions which might take place, the Drop struck him as being very small. "I don't know," said the man—"to be zure, six 'oud be "crowded, but foive 'oud hang very comfortable!"

ceived 800*l.* for *Wives as they were* ; Mr. Reynolds received for the *Blind Bargain* and *Out of place*, in the same season, 1000*l.* (N.B. this last named author, from commencing early, has, during his successful career, made by dramatic literature the unprecedented amount of 21,000*l.*), and sums comparatively equal have been repeatedly realised by others. Inasmuch as the authors are the very keystone of the building, so ought they to be proportionably remunerated ; but the case is quite different. There is in this vast metropolis but a certain portion, and that a very small one, of theatrical money—money that finds its way from the pocket of the patron into that of the playhouse ; and unless that portion be equitably distributed, in the absence of all assistance from Government, the principal theatres must go to ruin.

It is pretty evident, that NOVELTY (the sole support of the stage) unless it make its appearance in some new performer, which is rarely the case, can only be hoped for in an author ; and although it is equally evident that the said “novelty,” must be purveyed by the said performer, the obligations are so mutual as to put to the blush the present disgraceful disparity of payment between the one and the other. To this shameful disparity may be attributed in a great degree the falling off in our dramatic literature ; for as our original dramatists can, for the most part, obtain a much greater remuneration by composition for periodical publications, than they can upon the scene of their *quondam* glory, so the managers,

from the impossibility of paying actor and author on the same scale, are compelled to apply to translators and adapters, and support their own upon the resources of a foreign stage.

With the exception, perhaps, of that excellent man and eminent dramatist, Knowles, who can never be paid too much for his works, the principal theatres can no longer hold out sufficient inducement to scholars and men of genius to enter their arena, hemmed in, as they would be sure to find themselves, between the dictation of performers on one side, and their salaries on the other; the former humiliating the author's pride, and the latter emptying his pocket. I do not in this argument include the NEOPHYTE (as he has styled himself), Sir E. Bulwer, because his plots are for the most part of French extraction, and the language in which they are clothed very little calculated to enhance the value of the dramatic literature of the country.

Until the statements herein laid down are contravened, it is evident that the patent theatres have no greater enemies to contend with, than the very parties who ought to be, from common interest alone, their firmest friends and supporters. In commenting upon them with the freedom I have done, I have studiously avoided entering upon the privacy of life, whereon, with such abundant information, one might be more voluble than agreeable. In the sweeping censure I have thought proper to pass upon A BODY which, from an experience of nearly five-and-twenty

years, I have found exactly as I have represented it, I should be extremely sorry to include some members of *this* profession who would do honour to *any*; some whom I have had the pleasure of meeting in the very best society; some to whom I am indebted for many social hours at their own delightful tables—some who have contributed to the pleasures of mine; all knowing the worst side, and all practising on the best side, not only of their own immediate avocation, but of human life itself. There is not a peculiarity of the fraternity and sisterhood that we have not together discussed, admitted, and lamented; and to them I am imparting nothing that is new, and nothing that will annoy them. That the—

“Mimæ, balatrones, hoc genus omne

“Mœstum ac sollicitum est”

for what is herein chronicled, admits of no dispute—but there are noble spirits, “among them, but “not of them,” to whom no one line of vituperation can apply.

In the present career that many of the principal Metropolitan performers, and after them the *imitatores*, *servum pecus*, are now pursuing, in respect to the emoluments they exact from their employers, it “needs no ghost to tell” them that they are cutting their own throats; and that they are possessing themselves of the golden egg, but in doing so they are killing the goose that lays it. The advocates of these reck-

less descendants of *Thespis* do not reflect upon the eventual injury they are advising them to inflict on others, for a temporary benefit to themselves. They do not, or will not, see that the recoil which sooner or later must come will be visited on all those who have not, in the scramble, provided for the consequences. While such partisans are lamenting over the imaginary wrongs of the performer, they forget the more substantial grievances of the author and the manager; and in this partial support of only one portion of a vast community, they remind me forcibly of a passage in Tom Paine, an author little quoted,—

“ We mourn the gay plumage, but we forget the dying bird ! ”

## CHAPTER IV.

A London manager as he is, and as he ought to be—The conceit of authors and actors contrasted—Times when theatres *were* prosperous—Garrick's salary and season—"Orders" the cause of all kinds of *dis-orders*—The press and its privileges—Difference of value in paper and other currency—Disadvantages of people not paying for their admission—Increase of newspapers—A favour no boon—Individual opinion founded on general criticism—Disadvantages of steam to a theatre—Success and talent not synonymous—Reasons why no one ever should be a manager.

ALTHOUGH the British public, the Lord Chamberlain, and the worthy performers of London, have been set down as the principal causes of the invariable failures of the Patent Theatres, it must not be thence inferred that the managers have been the most immaculate and infallible class of people under the sun. They have had their faults, doubtless, but they have been, for the most part, "more sinned against than sinning."

A manager should be a very extraordinary fellow, for he has to do with more extraordinary people than any other man amongst his fellow creatures. He is a



sovereign, to be sure; but what is the use of a sovereignty, unless he can exclaim, with Alexander Selkirk,

“ I am monarch of all I survey :”

he is a general, most certainly; but what is the advantage of all his tactics, unless he has a disciplined army? He is considered to be the *arbiter elegantiarum*—but the *elegantiae*, i.e. (the performers), act the part of *arbitri*, by becoming VICEROYS over their KING; though apparently uncontrolled, he is in a perpetual state of dependence; and in the midst of power he is powerless.

In alluding to the death of QUEEN CHARLOTTE (consort of GEORGE THE THIRD), one of our noblest writers observed, that the situation of the Prince Regent had thereby become very peculiar: “ he was a child without a parent, and a parent without a child—he was a husband without a wife, a king without a crown, and a minor without an inheritance.” Some such victim of contrarieties is the manager of a London theatre. The dramatic world is a world of itself, containing a certain number of principalities dependent upon, but not holding themselves amenable to, the reigning authority. The subjects of its monarchy are too often beyond the reach of the crown, and the crown becomes, therefore, the sport of the subject.

To combat, with any degree of success, the vicissitudes of such a reign, the monarch should possess

advantages that fall to the lot of no one. One of the happiest ingredients in our mortal composition, TEMPER, *id est*, GOOD TEMPER, is the compass by which he can mainly hope to steer his vessel in safety; and when the numerous persons, and consequently the numerous tempers with which he has to contend, are considered, the wonder is that he can contend at all, or that he ever entered into the conflict.

The first grand point for a manager's consideration is THE PUBLIC: the necessity of endeavouring to please, and the equally great necessity of contriving not to offend them, particularly as there are so few of that public at all interested in his well, or ill doings. But such is the perversity of his position, that at the very moment he is striving most to gain their approbation, he may be incurring their peculiar displeasure, by the misapplication of his intentions, the neglect of his orders, the misconstruction of his views, and the frustration of his plans. His wishes, which he conceives to be those of his patrons, are entrusted to persons to whose interests they may be prejudicial; and on the guiding principle of *sauve qui peut*, they are seldom carried duly into effect. He is invariably misrepresented by all on whose slightest desire he has ever had the courage to put a negative; and from the moment he musters up the very necessary fortitude to adopt the monosyllable, no, "the war of the MANY with ONE" begins. If he were surrounded exclusively by people of intellect, he might stand some chance of whatever share of that qualification

he himself possesses, being proportionately respected ; but as from a bushel of folly there are but some given grains of sense to be winnowed, his expectations in that point of view are sure to be disappointed. He has to deal with so many "wise in their own conceit," that, as the proverb hath it, "there are more hopes of a fool than of them." He has, moreover, to deal with an immense catalogue of fools of whom there is no hope whatever. Where, then, is the hope for himself?

The conceit of an author is proverbial ; and with the exception of a select few, whose superiority will not admit of any alloy of vanity, there can be no question as to the truth of the proverb. But what is that conceit to the conceit of an actor? A WART to OSSA. An author, after all, is but vain upon one point ; an actor is vain upon all. You can scarcely persuade the most crooked varlet that ever presented himself at a stage-door for examination, that he is not "the glass of fashion, and the mould of form ;" or many a hound who literally yelps out his notes, that he is not a second Rubini. You can impress on the minds of very few who have once crossed the stage, that the British nation to a man is not thinking of them, morning, noon, and night ; while, excepting at the particular moment they are "strutting and fretting" before their eyes, the public never cast a thought upon them.

If any one manager had the intellect of all his

colleagues put together, there would be no competing with such people as these.

As respects authors, another great source of perplexity to an *entrepreneur*, the difficulty is not so frightful by any means in dealing with those of acknowledged reputation, and consequent utility, as with those who are candidates for the glory of seeing their works on the stage and themselves in print. Of some hundreds of pieces sent promiscuously by unknown writers to the manager, during my appearance in that capacity, there was but one deemed fit for representation; and amongst those submitted by men of note,\* many were found fraught with danger, and dismissed accordingly. As one instance among the various others to which he is subjected by candidates for stage honours may be mentioned this anecdote. A tragedy of nearly 600 pages, written by an author totally unknown, and likely ever to remain so, was sent me by one particular friend of mine, and

\* At the period when the late Mr. Morton was reader and "examiner of plays" to Drury Lane theatre, a very popular author sent me an adaptation of Halevy's opera of *La Tentation*, under the title of *Temptation*. I despatched it to Morton, who, after examining it, returned me the manuscript, together with his opinion on its merits, in the following humorous example of laconism:—

"DEAR BUNN,

"By not leading you into *Temptation*, I shall deliver you from evil.

Truly your's,—T. M."

strongly recommended by three others. The first was a moonlight scene, and in the opening soliloquy thereof the hero, gazing on the unclouded glory of Diana, accused her, despite her beauty and alleged chastity, of intriguing—(with whom can the reader imagine?)—with the “*Man in THE MOON.*” I mention this little circumstance merely to designate the difficult position of a manager in only one department of his vocation, for owing to my rejection of this pyramid, one of the friends in question has never spoken to me since.\*

Supposing, therefore, a manager to be fortunate enough to obtain the good opinion of that small portion of the public which may be looked upon as dramatically disposed, still having to steer through those awful whirlpools of *Charybdis* (the actors) on the one side, and *Scylla* (the authors) on the other, such good opinion cannot possibly be very long retained; consequently, with but a small portion of the public for you in the first instance, and the judgment of that portion soon after warped, it is a difficult and unequal combat to fight out. “Who would be a manager?” is a question which has been so repeatedly asked *of* them, and put *by* them, as to make it a matter of more than ordinary

\* Such a style of proceeding, while it makes me smile, reminds me of an Irishman's observation, on seeing the late Mr. Hiley Addington in extravagant antics, applauding Miss Stephens from a private box. On ascertaining who the gentleman was, he observed, “his name may be Hiley Addington, but his conduct is *highly* ridiculous.”

astonishment, that fresh managers should rise up almost with every succeeding season. To enter upon any undertaking *sans souci*, and to leave it *sans six-sous*, as is the case with so many of these speculators, should operate as a warning to others. .

It is to be recollected, however, in opposition to the recorded failures of the Patent Theatres, since their being rebuilt, that managers *have* made large sums of money by both of them, at a period when "times were better," demands of all claimants more reasonable, and the receipts were more equitably disposed of, than has been the case for many years past.\* Mr. Harris, senior, lived at Belmont, near Uxbridge, for a series of years in splendid style, on the profits of his exertions in Covent Garden theatre, and the enormous sums abstracted by Sheridan from the treasury of Drury Lane,† (his sole means of subsistence) are too notorious to require enumeration. The recollection of these bygone

\* It has been alleged as an excuse for the present exorbitant salaries, that money was far more valuable some years ago than it is now; but the existing state of things gives the lie direct to any such assertion, and proves that its value now is greater than ever. *Ex-gratia*: (for there is nothing like coming to the point,)—"Magazines," for one penny! "Locke on the human understanding" for three pence! "Best hats seven shillings!"—"Six miles in an Omnibus for six pence!"—"Steam to Gravesend, nine pence!"—"Ditto to France" for five shillings, and to the d——l himself for very little more!"

† I have before me the accounts of the two first seasons of Drury Lane theatre, from the opening, on the 15th September, 1747, under Mr. Garrick's management, the profits upon which were £15,558. 15s. 2½d. But then the salaries were, by comparison with those of

successes may have had some effect in luring on so many of us victims, to aim at similar results in less fortunate times; and to this stimulus may be added the invariable one of vanity, which prompts every man to believe himself wiser than his fellow.

I come now to another alarming difficulty with which a director of these theatres has to contend, which, despite the resolution and the prudence every novice is bent upon adopting, will never be got rid of, and which is of more vital detriment than may at first be imagined. I allude to the free admissions, commonly called *ORDERS* — the very bane of the profession. Contend as you may against the issue of such privileges, there are so many to whom, in the mutual exchange of courtesies, they *MUST* be given, that it is almost hopeless to draw the line of distinction. Performers for the most part stipulate for them — limit the issue to a few members, and you sour the rest of the company. The press claim them on the score of reciprocity (the admission of your advertisements on payment of the duty); and although by such argument they should naturally be extended only to those Journals whose circulation can render a correspondent advantage;\* yet, if you omit a paper,

the present day, a flea bite : Mr. Garrick (drawing all the town after his chariot wheels) had but £.525, exclusive of his benefit, for his exertions through an entire season; little more than what some of our unattractive beauties now receive for a month.

\* The unparalleled circulation and influence of the *Times Journal* has given rise to an impression that unusual privileges have always

or periodical of the vilest description, your reputation is assailed by it, and your exertions misrepresented in the most shameless and mendacious manner. An indiscriminate distribution of these "freedoms" is the most deceptive pivot upon which the fortunes of a theatre can possibly turn ; a more manifest instance of which cannot be cited than the following. The disastrous season of 1828-29, terminated, as previously alluded to, in the seizure of all the property in Covent Garden theatre at the instance of the parish of Saint Paul ; and as one proof of the misrule which led to such a calamity, this fact may be adduced, that at a preceding period of the management under which it occurred (*viz* : from the 17th of May to the 12th of July, 1824,) Mr. Robertson, treasurer to Messrs. Kemble, Willett, and Forbes, wrote 11,003 orders ; which, calculated at the rate of 7s. each (the admission at that time to the boxes), amounts to the sum of £3,851 1s. The particulars of this extraordinary "issue" are herewith given, for the satisfaction of those who collect theatrical curiosities, and are versed in theatrical anecdotes :

been demanded by its proprietors and contributors ; but during the several years I (to use a mercantile phrase) had dealings with them, I can quote few instances in which so little was required, where so much would have been with pleasure accorded.



“ Memorandum of 11,003 orders, amounting to the  
 “ sum of £3,851 1s., written, under the manage-  
 “ ment of Mr. Charles Kemble at Covent Garden  
 “ theatre (taking the stock nights in succession),  
 “ by Mr. Robertson, his treasurer, between the  
 “ 17th May and 12th July, 1824.”

		<i>Orders.</i>	<i>Amount.</i>
			<i>£. s. d.</i>
May	17	.. 277 (Mr. C. Kemble played <i>Falstaff</i> .)	96 19 0
	18	.. 201 - - - - -	70 7 0
	19	.. 317 (Mr. C. Kemble played <i>Falstaff</i> .)	110 19 0
	20	.. 187 - - - - -	65 9 0
	21	.. 238 (Mr. C. Kemble played <i>Benedick</i> .)	83 6 0
	22	.. 236 - - - - -	82 12 0
	24	.. 286 (Mr. C. Kemble played <i>Falstaff</i> .)	100 2 0
	25	.. 240 - - - - -	84 0 0
	27	.. 526 (Mr. C. Kemble played <i>Charles II.</i> )	184 2 0
	28	.. 394 (Mr. C. Kemble played <i>ditto</i> )	137 18 0
	29	.. 282 (Mr. C. Kemble played <i>ditto</i> )	98 14 0
	31	.. 4* - - - - -	1 8 0
June	1	.. 361 (Mr. C. Kemble played <i>ditto</i> )	126 7 0
	2	.. 188 - - - - -	65 16 0
	4	.. 515 (Mr. C. Kemble played <i>ditto</i> )	180 5 0
	7	.. 218 (Mr. C. Kemble played <i>Falstaff</i> .)	76 6 0
	8	.. 240 - - - - -	84 0 0
	9	.. 274 (Mr. C. Kemble played <i>Charles II.</i> )	95 18 0
	10	.. 166 - - - - -	58 2 0
	11	.. 294 (Mr. C. Kemble played <i>ditto</i> )	102 18 0
	12	.. 273 (Mr. C. Kemble played <i>ditto</i> )	95 11 0
	14	.. 198 (Mr. C. Kemble played <i>Faulconbridge</i> .)	69 6 0
	16	.. 541 (Mr. C. Kemble played <i>Charles II.</i> )	189 7 0
		<u>6456 (Carried forward,)</u>	<u>£.2259 12 0</u>

\* The King and Queen of the Sandwich Islands visited the Theatre this evening in state.

		<i>Orders.</i>				<i>Amount.</i>		
						<i>£.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
		6456 ( <i>Brought forward,</i> )				2259	12	0
June	17	..	397	-	-	138	19	0
	18	..	256	(Mr. C. Kemble played <i>Romeo</i> ,)	-	89	12	0
	19	..	219	-	-	76	13	0
	21	..	388	-	-	135	16	0
	22	..	342	-	-	119	14	0
	23	..	177	-	-	61	19	0
	25	..	233	-	-	81	11	0
	26	..	315	-	-	110	5	0
	28	..	247	-	-	86	9	0
	29	..	409	-	-	143	3	0
July	3	..	301	-	-	105	7	0
	5	..	266	(Mr. C. Kemble played <i>Falstaff</i> ,)		93	2	0
	7	..	269	(Mr. C. Kemble played <i>Beverley</i> ,)		94	3	0
	10	..	409	(Mr. C. Kemble played <i>Young Mirabel</i> ,)		143	3	0
	12	..	319	(Mr. C. Kemble played <i>Romeo</i> ,)	-	111	13	0
		<u>11,003—at Seven shillings</u>				<u>£.3,851</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>

It is pretty clear, from an examination of this singular document, that the greatest portion of these orders was given for the support of Mr. Charles Kemble, the principal manager, acting, on the nights marked down, the principal character.

In further evidence of the dangerous tendency of such practice, it very frequently happens that the parties to whom you give orders, particularly if they happen to be performers, congratulate their manager on there being a fine house, at the very time a little reflection would convince them that the appearance such house assumed was created by the free admissions which they and others had received. Give an

author a number of orders for the support of his play, and from the vociferation of his friends, by virtue of such orders, he not only dates its complete success, but maintains that it has been productive to the treasury—at least, FROM THE APPEARANCE OF THE HOUSE. Give an actor orders, and if hissed by every other person in the theatre, save those to whom he entrusted them, he will stoutly argue he was applauded throughout the evening. Give them to a tradesman, and, seeing a full house, without reflecting that half of its audience paid the same admission-money by which he got in himself, he will call the next day for his “little bill,” because there was so numerous an audience the night before.\*

It is an impression with many, that a given quantity of orders brings along with it a given quantity of money. I doubt it; and it is impossible, I should say, that it can ever bring the quantity it keeps away; for out of the £3851 worth of admissions gratuitously distributed, according to the foregoing declaration, at least one half of the amount might have found its

\* I once gave admissions to a gentleman for himself and family; and, having some legal business to transact for me, he came behind the scenes for a few minutes between the play and farce, to speak to me, and then returned to his party. When his bill of costs was, some time after, sent in, one of the items ran thus:—“To attending you in your room at the theatre, 6s. 8d.” (the night he and his household entered free,); but then, as Doctor Johnson said, in reply to an inquiry as to who such a gentleman was, “I am afraid he is an ATTORNEY!”

way into the treasury of the theatre. Then the trouble entailed upon a theatre by these courtesies is beyond belief. Those who apply for them, seldom do so, unless the entertainments to be seen are attractive; and though at the moment such applications are made you happen to be very much occupied on matters calculated to aid the exchequer, if you do not instantly attend to matters that cannot aid it at all, you are set down for an ill-bred upstart, in every respect unfit for your situation. Taken altogether, the ORDER SYSTEM is one of the most thankless, troublesome, and injurious of the many duties devolving on the manager of a theatre.

I have already enumerated some part of the sufferance to which the tribe of directors,

“ For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe,”

has ever been, and I much fear me ever will be subject: but there are others yet to be mentioned. The PRESS is a fearful antagonist to encounter, and the most difficult one to deal with. Attached to the London Press are many of my intimate and valued friends—men whose ability would elevate any situation, and whose character is a guarantee for all that honour calls its own—friends whose countenance and support it will be my highest pride ever to hear that I have deserved, as it is my grateful task to acknowledge. But there are also attached to it some of the dirtiest dogs in Christendom, who would sell their own birthright, and that

of all their fellow creatures, had they the power, for even half a mess of pottage. You cannot convince such persons as these, that, because they "belong to the press," they are not entitled to all the privileges so properly extended to publications upheld by reputation, talent, and enormous outlay, and consequently enjoying extensive circulation. Some of these people often start a new paper, in some shape or other, and base the probability of its success upon the free-admissions to theatres, by virtue of which they obtain that staple commodity called—ADVERTISEMENTS. How is a manager to draw his line of distinction herein? If he does not grant the boon they ask, they will lead him the life of a dog; and if he does, he runs the risk of offending those of respectability and station, by placing them on an equality with the very scum of literature.

Since the Stamp Duty was reduced to its present rate, and the unbridled license in writing, now resorted to, was countenanced, FIFTY-SEVEN applications have been made to me on behalf of Newspapers, of the existence of which I was utterly ignorant; and although many of them have "died and made no sign," many are yet in existence; and without the means of aiding the theatres to the value of one penny piece, they one and all exact the privileges of those who can, and do, render them permanent service. The offer invariably made by these mushrooms, of inserting your advertisement, as a boon, merely for the duty, is a tax instead of a favour, because the very limited circulation

of newly established papers neutralises the obligation. In a country so press-ridden as England is, and at the same time so undramatic, when so very few persons give their opinion of a performer or a performance, "until they see what the newspapers say," it is impossible to know how to deal with such parties. I am aware that it is very delicate ground to touch upon, but having hitherto had the support of the respectable portion of the press, I must bear up with becoming philosophy against the attacks of those to whom these remarks may give offence, satisfying myself by resorting to the ancient adage of *qui capit ille facit*.

To other obstacles in the way of any thing like a successful progress of a managerial career may be added those which have recently been thrown in the way by the Lord Chamberlain, on which I have fully entered in the preceding chapter, as well as on the everlasting emigration to America. This latter infliction has become more vexatious than ever, since the introduction of Steam Navigation. People being enabled now to go to New York in almost as short a space of time, as it took them formerly to go to Edinburgh, performers who should belong to the permanent stock-company of a theatre, will only engage with you for a given period—off then they start to the United States—and it not unfrequently happens that they engage to return at an advanced part of your season, and with singular coolness (in many instances with singular felicity) fix the day for such return, and promise to attend an eleven o'clock rehearsal on

that day, with a thorough contempt for wind and tide, and some thousands of miles through which they have to baffle such opponents. Supposing then a London manager to have the many faults with which he stands so frequently charged, it is but fair to admit that he has enough to contend with, not only to cause him to commit them, but a great many more.

Success is not at all times the criterion to judge by ; nor does "being praised for every lucky blunder," constitute the possession of judgment or generalship. Instance upon instance might be quoted, of the most *distinguished* men in every avocation of life, and certainly in theatrical life, being nearly *extinguished*, for some mistake, the commission of which had swamped the recollection of all former renown. Assailed on all sides as he everlastingly is, a manager *should* be an extremely clever fellow, with a remarkably fine temper ; but in four cases out of five he is set down for a blockhead, and that for the most part by much greater blockheads than himself.

Let all those who have never had any taste of the quality of the respective delights herein catalogued, with which the director of the London stage has hourly to contend, but have to cater for an untheatrical public ; let them deal with turbulent and exorbitant performers ; with the reserve of eminent authors, and the conceit of shallow translators and adapters ; with the scurrility and misrepresentation of the worst part of the press, from which they cannot

be protected by the better part ; with the oppression rather than the countenance of the Lord Chamberlain's office ; with the emigration of sterling talent to America, and the sterility of talent at home, and I think they will join the cry that others have raised, and exclaim—"WHO WOULD BE A MANAGER?"



## CHAPTER V.

The value of experience exemplified—The general result of all prosecutions—The Garrick Club—What it ought to effect, and what it does—Thomas Campbell's reception in it—Singular success leading to singular disaster—Kean and Macready's Shaksperian language—Madame Malibran's mind defined in her correspondence—Mr. Hackett and Mr. George Colman—Mr. Dowton's opinion of American editions of English plays—Mr. Kean's death, and his last appearance preceding it—Union of the two Patent theatres—Causes, or rather reasons, for its necessity.

HAVING in the preceding chapters stated the effects, and entered upon the causes, which have proved so disastrous to the patent theatres, I now purpose going still further into detail by illustrations of both facts, during the period I had personally the power of judging, from experience—and *experientia docet*, we are taught to believe—unquestionably it ought to do so.

From the daily occurrence of many, if not most, of the circumstances previously touched upon, the possibility of uniting the two theatres, which had "many a time and oft" been discussed, began at last to be matter of serious consideration. Prosecutions

had been going on at the suit of the proprietors of these theatres against certain minor houses, for an infringement on their patents—all ending in nothing ; for when they sought redress from the Government, they were called upon to prosecute ; and when they *did* prosecute, they were denounced as informers. This state of things led to repeated public meetings of the disaffected, and to the presentation of petitions to Parliament for the repeal of all existing restrictions relating to the drama. These opinions continued to gather still more force at the beginning of 1832, on the first of January in which year a theatrical gossiping society, on a scale of greater magnitude than any that had hitherto been opened, sprung up ; where the discussion of all such matters constituted (as it formerly used to do with the three old women at the corner of Bow Street, of whom Mathews had so great a horror) the very nourishment of the concern—I allude to “the Garrick Club.”

The Club, thus christened, deserves particular notice in these pages, from the conviction the writer has always been impressed with, and has invariably stated, of its being one of the most detrimental institutions to the best interests of the drama, and the well-doing of the two patent theatres, that ever was established. It was formed towards the end of the year 1831, for purposes very different from those it at present in my opinion carries out, and as such is entitled to especial comment. The original object of its founders was, no doubt, to bring into closer connection the

player and the patron, for the advancement of the one and the amusement of the other. It will probably be maintained, with an immense flourish of rhodomontade, that its higher aim was to uphold the stage by every legitimate means, to countenance the respectable portion of its professors, to advance the general welfare of the principal theatres, and to give a becoming impetus to the dramatic literature of the country.\* Let us inquire how this ought to be done, and how it has been done. To carry so laudable an object into effect, such club should be composed of leading men of *ton*, of property, of learning, of science, and of taste—of a few of the very few performers of talent to which the stage can now lay claim, and as many as possible of the most distinguished members of other professions, whose genius could shed its influence and protection over

“ The youngest of the sister arts,

“ Where all their beauty blends !”

I am willing to admit that, by the rare assemblage, by the lucky union of so many of the great and good, much permanent advantage might be brought about. The very reverse, however, I consider to be

\* The first rule of the Garrick Club runs thus :—The Garrick Club is instituted for the general patronage of the drama ; for the purpose of combining the use of a club, on economical principles, with the advantages of a literary society ; for the formation of a library of theatrical and costume works ; and for bringing together the patrons of the drama, and gentlemen eminent in their respective circles.

the case, both as regards the constitution of the Club, and its consequences. The grand desideratum of all such societies—that of keeping them select—has in the first place been totally lost sight of, and several of its noble and early patrons have, it is said, consequently seceded. The familiarities practised by “some players whom I have seen play,” the professional slang in which they are so apt to indulge, and the eternal tax they are upon all who associate with them, have mainly contributed to this result. The Garrick Club, thus shorn of its proper supporters, has degenerated into a sort of Junior Law Club. At its tables congregate some of the *soi-disant* critics of the day, who gather together what little dramatic intelligence they deal in, from the gabble, and very frequently from the hoaxing, of some waggish bystanders; and whose notions of any particular actor’s performance, are derived from what they have heard that particular self-satisfied actor say of himself.

The natural tendency of the mind to censure, faint praise, or deep damnation, is here indulged in to the heart’s content; very likely not with any ill-intention, but with the impression the dealers in it labour under, that they are “nothing if not critical.” There are one or two supposed Solons in such matters, who bring an account, to the nightly gadders herein assembled, of the presumed receipts for that evening of every theatre in the metropolis—who would be miserable if they could not state them, and more so if their statements were not believed. Not a domestic

calamity amongst the many to which theatrical life is subject, but it is known here the moment it happens, and is discussed with mysterious avidity. The daily object of its visitors is to listen to the *cancans* of the green-room, instead of upholding the productions of the stage; to retail the jokes of some author over the bottle, instead of giving them the benefit of "loud laughter" in the scenes they belong to; and to lure brother members to the fascinations of the dinner-table, instead of tempting them to the enjoyment of a private box.

It would perplex a wiser man than many of the learned pundits belonging to this Society, to name one single benefit, by way of set-off to all this mischief, which it has ever conferred on the drama of the country, or on the two principal Temples dedicated to it. There is, to be sure, an annual dinner on the 23rd of April, to commemorate him who needs no commemoration; rendered famous by the extraneous contribution of a self-important critic to the pocket of a self-important dramatist, both supposed to be Shaksperian spirits. But what good does this do to the drama, its professors, and the theatres royal Drury Lane and Covent Garden? Is there, on an average, a shilling a day that makes its escape out of the pockets of all the members put together, into the treasuries of these two theatres? Most of them are free of one or other of the houses, and those who are not, find no difficulty in becoming so, for the nonce. Do they award any

premium to literary talent, that can stimulate the efforts of struggling genius? "Divil a ha'put!" as one of their Irish members is occasionally apt to exclaim. What good then *does* this association confer, to counter-balance all the mischief which it, in my opinion, leads to? Why it affords a great many worthy people, who prefer not giving their address, an opportunity of dating and receiving letters that have all the appearance of coming from, and going to, a very important place. It moreover affords many a malcontent the peculiar advantage of coals and candles gratis, the reading of newspapers and periodicals, foreign and domestic; the use of pens, ink, and paper; together with the cookery of a chop and the necessary appendages of plate and linen, at a far cheaper rate than human ingenuity could possibly accomplish it at home. It serves as an emporium, where the traffickers in small talk may be sure of finding a customer. All this may be exceedingly pleasant, but has no connection whatever with the advancement of the drama; on the contrary, it leads to its degradation, from the fact of such scenes, all very apposite in most other clubs, taking place in one assuming to itself, and rejoicing in, the histrionic appellation of "The Garrick."

Imagine an association, claiming to possess any literary men in its ranks, (and there are some of eminence enlisted therein,) having dared to blackball Campbell, the author of the *Pleasures of Hope*, when proposed as a member. It may be a matter of

some surprise that the peerless author of *Hohenlinden* should have suffered himself to be put in nomination for any such preferment; but it must astound all who hear of it, to think that he was deemed unworthy of admission. Mr. Campbell is not merely qualified to enter, but in reality *has* entered, the first circles of society in this or any country he has visited—his name is a *passe partout*—his genius is the shrine at which the literary pilgrims of all civilized nations have delighted to kneel and worship; and instead of rejecting the wish he had expressed to enroll himself amongst a band of galliards, they would have done themselves honour by seeking his companionship.

I happened to express the opinions which I am now recording to that perfection of Americanism and dogmatism, Mr. Price, who, by some unaccountable process seemed then, whatever he may be now, the axis upon which the opinions and conduct of this body corporate turned; and he alleged to me, as a reason for Mr. Campbell's rejection, that after a certain period of the evening, he was occasionally in the habit of breaking glasses he had emptied, and decanters which had been full; and that, moreover, he was not particularly solicitous for the welfare of any looking-glass that chanced to be casting a reflection on him at the time. Supposing this to be true (and I pretend neither to question nor advance its veracity), it appears to me only making matters worse. If "The Garrick" were the most immaculate and straight-laced club in the "vil-

“lage” (as I have heard Mr. George Wombwell, at his pleasantest of all tables and in his pleasantest of all manners, denominate the British metropolis) where a pint of wine would be considered a luxury, and a bottle a positive excess, there might be some justice in putting forward such a reason ; but as matters stand the case is very different. I have always found this club a source of great annoyance to the two theatres, and several friends of mine have left it from its being no source of pleasure to themselves ; but, following up the opinion I have delivered to its disadvantage, I regret to say that some of the best men in existence, many of them my intimate acquaintances, are still to be found amongst its members.

The theatrical season of 1832-33, began with the novel feature of an enterprising foreigner, Monsieur Laporte, succeeding to the management of Covent Garden theatre, opposed with great spirit at Drury Lane by Captain Polhill. Previously to the commencement of the winter campaign, a successful *coup* was made at the former theatre, by twenty-six performances of French plays and Paganini concerts ; and the ballet of *Masaniello*, with the addition of a very popular pantomime, then attracted all the play-going part of the metropolis. Add to this that an unusual sensation was subsequently created by the representation of the *Israelites in Egypt*, the first attempt at giving an Oratorio in action, assisted by the customary *accessoires* of a theatre. Despite three such



singular instances of luck within so short a period, the season was only carried on to the one hundred and thirty-third night, when Covent Garden closed, and the company betook themselves to the Olympic, as subsequently alluded to.

The exertions at the rival theatre were marked with energy and liberality, for early in the season Mr. Kean and Mr. Macready appeared together in the tragedy of *Othello* ;\* Mademoiselle Duvernay and a complete corps de ballet were imported from France ; a German company of the first calibre was likewise engaged ; and the matchless Malibran† made her first

\* I was extremely amused with a brief specimen of SHAKSPERIAN LANGUAGE addressed to me by both these gentlemen, after the curtain fell on their first appearance together in the tragedy of *Othello*. Kean had a thorough contempt for Macready's acting ; and the latter affecting to be indignant at the mode in which Mr. Kean had conducted himself (in always keeping a step or two behind him, whereby the spectator had a full view of the one performer's countenance and only a side view of the other), bounced into my room, and at first vowed he would play with him no more. He finally wound up by saying, " And pray what is the—next p—lay you ex—pect me to appear in—with that low—man ? " I replied that I would send him word. I went up into Kean's dressing-room, where I found him scraping the colour off his face, and sustaining the operation by copious draughts of cold brandy and water. On my asking him what play he would next appear in with Macready, he ejaculated, " How the —— should I know what the —— plays in ! "

† Although I shall have occasion hereafter to enter more fully into the character of Madame Malibran, and desirable as it is not to encumber this work with unnecessary correspondence, I cannot deny myself the gratification of introducing here two from amongst the many letters I received from her at this time. So much nonsense

essay on the British stage in Bellini's opera of *La Somnambula*. Thus to a powerful English company were added the most distinguished *artistes* of France and Germany, with a spice of Americanism in the person of Mr. Hackett ; yet with all these strenuous endeavours, the loss attendant upon them was something

has been published, having for its object the illustration of her extraordinary mind, that her own letters are the best refutation :—

“ Rue St. James, 6 May, 1833.

“ MON CHER MONSIEUR BUNN,

“ Permettez moi de continuer ma correspondance avec vous en Français. Je m'explique peut-être plus clairement dans cette langue.

“ En réponse à ce que vous me dites relativement aux droits que, selon vous, je n'ai pas de chanter dans aucun concert donné dans un local de théâtre, je vous dirai que tous les juges de la terre, soit Anglais, soit Français, Turc, ou Chinois, vous disent que j'ai par mon engagement *le droit* de chanter dans toute salle de concert—*SALLE DESTINÉE À DES CONCERTS*—peu importe dans quel local qu'elle soit située, ou bâtié. Mais il ne s'agit pas ici ni de droit ni de juges ; je vous réponds seulement de cette façon pour vous faire croire, mon cher directeur, que quand vous auriez cent mille diables au corps, vous n'auriez pas raison avec une tête Espagnole. J'aime donc mieux votre second moyen, il vous prouvera du moins que l'intérêt est pour moi le moindre considération, et que je ne désire rien tant que de conserver entre nous ces relations amicales qui ont régnées jusqu'à ce jour. Je viens donc proposer de faire, pendant le mois de Mai, une représentation, de plus que mon engagement ne le porte, au bénéfice de l'administration de Drury Lane, à la condition expresse que vous ne mettez pas obstacle, pas le moindre obstacle à tout espèce de concerts qui se présenteront pour moi. Maintenant je m'arrête là . . . . . Je vous annonce que c'est pour *la première fois de ma vie* ! ! et je

considerable. This gentleman, with less taste than talent, substituted a character which he called *Solomon Swap* (in Colman's comedy of *Who wants a Guinea?* selected for his *début*) in lieu of the original *Solomon Gundy*—an alteration that gave general dissatisfaction. Amongst other malcontents the inimitable Dowton sent me the following opinion:—

m'en attribue quelque mérite, par ce que je vous trouve un peu *dur* avec moi.

“ M. F. MALIBRAN.”

The next is still more diverting: it refers to Monsieur Chelard's operetta of the *Students of Jena*, which she was anxious to appear in, and which is transcribed *verbatim et literatim*.

“ St. James's-street, Mardi.

“ Again and again, allwais me, and eternally me, my dear Mister Bunn. I have been tormenting poor Chelard out of his wits. I want to have my part to practise it, know it, and be able to play it in 10 days the latest. I am sure if you give proper orders for the copy of 'the parts *we* shall be all ready, at least *I* will be ready in 8 days. . . . but —— rehearsals, parts, rehearsals, parts, orders, rehearsals, no rehearsals without parts, no parts without orders, and no orders without my eternal hints, and my never ending letters; since it appears you will not do me the high honour of comming at my house for a quarter of an hour, to have a little settling chit-chat—however it may be, I wait your pleasure, noble cousin, and humbly beg for an answer when it may suit your Majesty.

“ Nonsense apart, pray say YES or no, for it would be too late to give orders for the copies, in a few days, we should not have the necessary time for learning. \*

“ To  
A Bunn !!!!!  
Esquair !!!!!

Believe me,  
Your's, &c., &c., &c.,  
MARIA M——, &c., &c.”

" T. R. D. L.

16 Nov. 1832.

" MY DEAR BUNN,

" D—— all Yankee editions of *Who wants a Guinea?* Mr. Hackett seems a civil man to me, and I wish to oblige him if I can; so I am studying three lengths of his alterations; he is the only actor by the bye, that designedly cuts out all his jokes — perhaps it's the American fashion. Now after this d——d nonsense, do give me an order for to-night.

Your's truly,

W. DOWTON."

But the perfection of all indignation was manifested by the eminent author, George Colman, then the Examiner of Plays. I enclosed him Mr. Hackett's alterations, in a letter couched in terms correspondent with those of the intimacy we were upon, merely enquiring if a license were necessary for them. In answer to this I received the following sample of offended dignity, which however did not eventually mar our good fellowship. The frigid monosyllable with which the wit starts, created considerable consternation, on opening the letter :

" Brompton Square,

14th November, 1832.

"<sup>d</sup> SIR,

" In respect to the alterations made by *Mr. Hackett* — a most appropriate name on the present occasion!

—were the established play of any living dramatist, except myself, so mutilated, I should express to the Lord Chamberlain, the grossness and unfairness of the manager who encouraged such a proceeding;—but as the character of *Solomon Gundy* was originally a part of my own writing, I shall request His Grace to license ‘the rubbish,’ as you call it, which you have sent me.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

GEORGE COLMAN.’

“ To

Alfred Bunn, Esq.

&c. &c. &c.”

The May of this season will ever be marked amongst the mournful kalends of the theatrical profession, as the month in which Mr. Kean departed from this “vale of tears.” He was under an engagement at Drury Lane theatre (a portion of which was unexpired), when, one evening, he requested me to ask Captain Polhill to lend him 500*l*. I did so, but Captain Polhill very prudently refused the request, unless security were given for its repayment; Mr. Kean’s proposal to work out the sum by subsequent performances being, in the state of health in which he then was, not very satisfactory. In a day or two afterwards, his name appeared in the Covent Garden bills, in which he was announced to play in conjunction

with his son. The circumstance was thus noticed in the Drury Lane *affiche* of March 21 :—

☞ “ In consequence of the announcement, at  
“ another theatre, of

“ MR. KEAN,

“ the public is respectfully informed, that the engage-  
“ ment of that gentleman at this theatre does not  
“ expire until the 30th instant, which engagement  
“ has only been suspended, by the receipt of the  
“ following certificate from Mr. Kean's medical ad-  
“ viser :—

“ Mr. James Smith presents his compliments to  
“ Mr. Bunn : he is sorry to inform him, that Mr.  
“ Kean is confined by so very severe an attack of  
“ gout in his right hand and arm, and some threaten-  
“ ing also of the same sort in his legs, as to render it  
“ QUITE IMPOSSIBLE for him to perform at present.

“ Mr. J. Smith will be happy to inform Mr. Bunn,  
“ from day to day, how Mr. Kean goes on, as it is  
“ impossible at present to fix the day for his re-  
“ appearance.

“ Richmond Green, March 12, 1833.”

The opinion of counsel was taken, as to the possibility of obtaining an injunction, but it was considered out of the question, and abandoned. Look here at the position of a manager : a flagrant act is

committed, for which, owing to the impossibility of ascertaining any direct damage, no compensation can be obtained, and the person committing it is literally hurra'd by the public. A nice profession! Luckily the result of this breach of contract, however, turned out to be of trifling import to the theatre, for the hand of death was on the offending party; who, on his appearance at Covent Garden theatre, being unable to proceed beyond the second act of *Othello*, the curtain fell upon the last appearance in public of one of the most extraordinary men that had ever attracted attention.

The prospect of the two theatres (the one closed and the other undone in the midst of victory), led to a renewal of the question, previously agitated, of uniting their interests. The death of Mr. Kean diminished most seriously the effective force of their *Dramatis Personæ*; other members of it were about to disperse themselves in different directions—some emigrating, some retiring, some maintaining expectations too extravagant to be listened to, and such as could only be kept up through a continued rivalry of the two houses; while at the same time a petty but furious warfare against the actual safety of both, was being waged by all parties in connection or intimacy with the managers of some of the minor establishments. In the opinions of the most experienced men attached to the profession, there seemed to be no other means of saving them from impending annihilation, than by uniting them under one management. Though open

rebellion stared us in the face, from all those whose only hope of their cupidity being complied with, lay in the competition between

“—— The houses twain  
“ Of Covent Garden and of Drury Lane;”

still, it seemed more advisable to brave that than to submit any longer to the tyranny which, from a paucity of talent, had latterly been inflicted upon their respective treasuries. In such opinion I heartily joined, and accordingly devoted myself to the accomplishment of so desirable an end. To that opinion I still stoutly adhere; and although I shall not have many to back my judgment, (especially those who, being ignorant of the causes which led to the dissolution of the UNION I effected, think because it *was* dissolved it never could have succeeded;) yet nothing can at present persuade me, that any other course can eventually save these two properties. I do not say that it actually will, but I think it will. Be that as it may, the GRAND JUNCTION took place: how it worked, and how it terminated, it will be our province to enquire into. At all events, it gave rise to an excitement, (the vital spark of theatrical existence,) and to a degree of amusement—fun if you will—not likely to occur again. While one might be tempted to exclaim, “It’s life—dammee it’s life,” I cannot deny it was a very troublesome, and did not turn out, from singular circumstances, at all a profitable life.



## CHAPTER VI.

A good address very desirable—Mr. Henry Harris's opinion of the author's—Opposition to it—Mr. Bulwer and his Bill—The Duke of Gloucester—False reports likely to lead to other reports—The Duke of Wellington's favourite maxim—Symptoms of hostilities—Mr. Sheridan Knowles, and his "comates in exile"—Memorial to his Majesty, and its gracious reception—Different views taken by different authors—The King a better judge than his subjects—Two theatres better than nineteen, in an undramatic city, logically discussed—A trip to Paris.

HAVING in the months of April and May, 1833, made the necessary arrangements with the committee of Drury Lane, and the proprietors of Covent Garden theatre, the following address, as the first result of these arrangements, was issued to the public, and the profession :—

## ADDRESS.

" The new and doubly responsible situation in  
 " which I am placed, as lessee of both the Patent  
 " Theatres, renders it, I presume, neither egotistical  
 " nor supererogatory on my part, frankly to inform  
 " the two companies, and the profession at large, of

“ the course I mean to adopt, at this unprecedentedly  
“ critical period of dramatic history.

“ All parties will admit that the theatrical times  
“ have long been ‘*out of joint* ;’ for within a very  
“ recent period Covent Garden theatre was not only  
“ prematurely closed, but the scenery, dresses, and  
“ properties, were actually advertised for sale: and  
“ although the theatre was afterwards re-opened, it  
“ was effected by public subscription, and by the  
“ creditors’ consent to take a composition for their  
“ claims. It will also be recollected that, during  
“ the whole of the previous ten years’ management,  
“ it had but one profitable season.

“ The fate of Drury Lane theatre, during the  
“ said ten years, has been equally unfortunate: since  
“ three successive lessees have totally failed, and it is  
“ only the wealth and the great punctuality of Cap-  
“ tain Polhill which have saved him from being simi-  
“ larly involved; while the disastrous result of the  
“ present season at Covent Garden is proved, by the  
“ separation of the company from that theatre, and  
“ its being reduced to perform at the Olympic.

“ I submit ‘*chance had no hand in this*,’ and for  
“ one obvious reason, *viz*: that previously to Mr.  
“ Harris leaving Covent Garden theatre, it was so  
“ far a prosperous concern, that annually very large  
“ sums were paid, towards liquidating the debt  
“ caused by the new building. Then it should be  
“ remembered, that, during this management, whilst  
“ the public could see a tragedy performed by John

“ Kemble, George Cooke, and Mrs. Siddons, and  
“ afterwards by Miss O’Neil, Messrs. Young, Mac-  
“ ready, and C. Kemble, they could in the same  
“ theatre enjoy the combined talents of Miss  
“ Stephens, Miss M. Tree, Messrs. Liston, Jones,  
“ Farren, Fawcett, Emery, Incledon, &c., and  
“ yet it is as extraordinary as true (which can be  
“ proved by the treasurer of each theatre), that the  
“ manager’s weekly payments in salaries, have, since  
“ the abolition in September 1822 of the MAXIMUM  
“ so long preserved by the late Messrs. Sheridan  
“ and Harris, INCREASED, almost in a ratio to the  
“ DECREASE of the RECEIPTS.

“ It is, therefore, to provide, as far as practicable,  
“ for the loss of so large a portion of the above  
“ talent, that makes the scheme of uniting the pre-  
“ sent companies one of very pressing necessity, in  
“ order that the public may once more witness the  
“ legitimate drama properly represented; for it was  
“ wisely remarked by Mr. Henry Harris, (on a recent  
“ occasion of petition to the legislature against ad-  
“ ditional theatres,) that ‘actors are not like *mecha-*  
“ *nics*, to be found at a *house of call* ;’ and death  
“ has just deprived the stage of another of its bright-  
“ est ornaments, who, in his short career, was always  
“ found individually attractive.

“ However unpleasant, therefore, it may prove to  
“ my feelings to be compelled to return to this sys-  
“ tem of the *maximum*, I am sorry to say, that there  
“ appears (under existing circumstances) no other

“ expedient ; and such being the case, it is hoped the  
 “ actors will take into consideration first,—that most  
 “ professions have felt the *severe pressure of the*  
 “ *times* ; and afterwards the proved impossibility of  
 “ paying performers and other branches of these  
 “ large establishments under the present expensive  
 “ and ruinous *régime*.

“ To conclude, I throw myself on the candour  
 “ and liberality of the profession, and also on that of  
 “ the public and the press, to aid and uphold me  
 “ in my humble endeavours to restore the prosperity  
 “ of that long neglected but rational source of  
 “ amusement—THE NATIONAL DRAMA.

A. BUNN.

“ London, May 27, 1833.”

The spirit of this “ address”\* was unanimously  
 adopted by the press ; but, as might be expected, was

\* The following is the answer of Mr. Henry Harris (so many years  
 the manager, and at the very time proprietor of 7-12ths of Covent  
 Garden theatre) to my letter enclosing the said “ address ;”—

“ Wierre au bois, near Samer,

Sunday, June 2—33.

“ MY DEAR BUNN,

“ Your’s of the 30th May just received ; and I have half an hour to  
 save the post, to assure you we were much pleased with your ex-  
 cellent address, which is at once manly, straight-forward, and intel-  
 ligent, and must carry conviction to the minds of that *small portion*  
 of the public who are conversant with theatricals, and must I think  
 come home to the feelings of even the ACTORS. You know the  
 junction of the patent theatres has been long a favourite scheme of

not at all relished by any of the leading members of the profession; for one especial reason, that it aimed a vital blow at the pretensions of those who had made up their minds, for the rest of their natural lives, to listen to no *maximum* of salary whatever laid down by a manager, and above all to a weekly salary of 20*l*. The most determined thrust at it, however, was made by Mr. Bulwer, who, having in an earlier part of the session of Parliament asked for leave to bring in a Bill, which had for its object the annihilation of the two patent theatres, on the 25th July "moved that the said bill do now "pass." I had two or three interviews with the honourable gentleman, to point out such modifications as I thought would be acceptable to the patentees; but the legislative conceit which had then taken

mine, as from *that* alone I saw the smallest chance of either being able to exist, or to stand against the tide of oppressive innovation which has been suffered by ignorant and radical Lord Chamberlains and attempted by levelling destructives of all property. The two theatres, under one able, active, and judicious management may laugh their threats to scorn, and with their *double* broadside blow their puny assailants clean out of the water. I need not say how glad I shall be to give every assistance in my power for the furtherance of this arduous undertaking. We look forward with pleasure to your promised visit: you will find us 'embowered in a wilderness 'of sweets,' and what is I hope as much à *votre goût*, LE CAVE is in the highest state of perfection. Mrs. Harris desires her best remembrances, and believe me,

My dear Bunn,

Your's very truly,

HENRY HARRIS."

possession of all young reformers soon silenced my earnest representations, and with, "I can't think of such a thing!"—"that's out of the question"—"I can allow nothing of the sort!" &c. (as if the genius and the power of King, Lords, and Commons, lay in one learned and despotic pericranium,) I was dismissed, and the bill passed by a majority of 31.

Mr. Bulwer knew little about the drama, or the rights and privileges of those in connection with it; and he cared just as much as he knew: but popularity was the order of the day, and an attempt to destroy a supposed monopoly was sure to obtain that popularity. Mr. Bulwer did not then reflect, nor has he since, according to his late speeches, that increasing the number of theatres leads to the very destruction of those already in existence, as well as of the drama itself, by the dispersion of what talent our stage possesses; the concentration of which, the good sense and taste of all practical men have invariably aimed at. Two courses were now left: one, an appeal to the House of Lords, and the other, a memorial to the Throne; both of which were adopted.

At an interview with which I was honoured by his late Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester,\* that

\* At this interview the Duke began by saying, "Let me see, you're an American, I believe; the King told me so." To which I replied, "Will your Royal Highness condescend to tell His Majesty that I thank God I am an Englishman!"

prince kindly undertook to present my petition to the House of Peers, and on the 2nd of August their Lordships\* were pleased to reject this monstrous bill, and to prove to its supporters that, luckily, there were more legislators than one, in the United Kingdom.

In order to instigate "my Lords" to an opposite line of conduct, a public meeting was convened the day before (August 1) at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, at which Mr. Bulwer delivered himself of sundry observations that, according to the report in the papers, made an unwarrantable reflection upon me, and consequently led to the following correspondence :

(No. 1.)

" Theatre Royal, Covent Garden,  
Friday, August 2, 1833.

" SIR,

" In the report in this day's *Times*, of yesterday's meeting at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, at which you were pleased to designate me 'a double-faced 'Janus,' you are stated to have expressed your regret that during the progress of your Bill in the House of Commons, 'the Janus alluded to had 'prosecuted one of his cotemporaries.'

\* During the debate, a Noble Lord asked the Duke of Wellington if, as the majority would be but small, they had not better let the bill go into committee! "No, no; always get a victory when "you can," was the Duke's laconic reply.

" I shall feel obliged to you to inform me if the above report be correct.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

To

A. BUNN."

E. L. Bulwer, Esq., M.P.,

Hertford-street, May Fair.

(No. 2.)

" Hertford-street, August 2, 1833.

" SIR,

" The report in the *Times* does not convey a very accurate statement of my remarks. I did not term you ' a double-faced Janus,'—what I said was this, that there was no longer a competition between even two theatres—that the two theatres were united under one lessee, that they were twin cherries upon one stalk—a sort of double-faced Janus!! The term was applied to the theatres, and not to an individual. I also added, ' that I understood' (which I had done generally before entering the room) ' that a prosecution had been announced against the Victoria Theatre,'—if I remember right a similar and uncontradicted statement had been already in the newspapers. I conclude, therefore, that I was not mistaken in the information I received.

I am, Sir,

" To

Your obedient servant,

A. Bunn, Esq.

E. L. BULWER."

&c., &c., &c."



(No. 3.)

“ Theatre Royal, Covent Garden,  
August 3, 1833.

“ SIR,

“ I have received your letter, in which you disclaim any personal application of language, and I therefore beg to state, in contradiction to the information you refer to, that I never even contemplated the prosecution of a minor theatre.

I am, Sir,

“ To                                      Your obedient servant,  
E. L. Bulwer, Esq., M.P.                      A. BUNN.”  
    &c., &c.”

The opposition which was now going on in the most formidable manner against the UNION, was supported, to my very great regret, by one whose name and talents lent it the most efficient aid—JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.\* That his line of conduct was actuated by principle admits of no dispute; and happy am I to say that it has in no respect interrupted our good-fellowship, nor, eventually, our dealings. The

\* During the progress of this squabble, I could not lose sight of one of the main duties which had devolved on me—that of making engagements. The first author to whom I sent a proposal was, of course, Mr. Knowles, in the following letter, which gave rise to those which follow:

“ Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,  
22nd June, 1833.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ In furtherance of the short conversation we had together on the 18th instant, upon the subject of your future dramatic works, I

decision of the House of Lords induced this gentleman, and the party with whom he was acting, to prefer a petition to the Crown, praying for a licence to erect a third theatre, and I consequently followed it up by

---

can only say that if it is your intention to select either of the theatres under my management for the performance of those works, I shall be most happy to receive them; as a proof of which I beg to say that, fully sensible of the genius which the community at large has acknowledged, it is not my desire to confine the terms of remuneration to those which are usually given to dramatic authors for successful productions; but that I will advance, in your case, in the ratio of two-thirds—*viz.*, that inasmuch as the customary price for a full tragedy, play, or opera, has been three hundred pounds, so shall you be entitled to receive FIVE HUNDRED; and in all private treaty for your dramatic works which may not be on the scale of full pieces, the same consideration shall be made in your individual case, without reference to other authors.

I am, my dear Sir,

Your's, very truly,

A. BUNN."

" To

J. S. Knowles, Esq.

&c., &c., &c."

To which, as I think, liberal offer, I received this reply:

" 24th June, 1833.

" DEAR SIR,

" I am pledged to stand by my co-mates in exile, and of course must do so. Were there no such impediment, however, to my treating with you, I could not accept your offer, as I am determined to sustain the principal character in my own dramatic works.

I am, truly your's,

" To

J. S. KNOWLES."

A. Bunn, Esq."

Which reply rendered the following rejoinder necessary :

a counter petition, of which the following is a copy. As an important document for reference merely, in a matter so peculiarly affecting the two theatres, it is worth preserving :—

“ TO THE KING’S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

“ The humble Petition of Alfred Bunn, Lessee of the Theatres Royal Drury Lane, and Covent Garden.

“ *Most Humbly Sheweth,*

“ That your petitioner most humbly begs to represent to your Most Gracious Majesty, that having

---

“ Theatre Royal, Covent Garden,  
June 24, 1833.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I think it a duty I owe to myself, in reply to your letter of this day’s date, to say that, as far as I am concerned, if your ‘ co-mates ‘ are in exile’ their banishment is voluntary, and that my offer did not exclude your performance in your productions.

I am, dear Sir,

Your’s truly,

A. BUNN.”

“ To

J. S. Knowles, Esq.

&c., &c., &c.”

Considering that the feelings under which Mr. Knowles took up the matter might have undergone some change, on my return from France I renewed my application, which produced the subjoined notes, and with the departure of this gifted genius to America, the matter dropped.

“ Randolph-street, Camden Town,  
23rd Sept., 1833.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ As I consider the present monopoly to be an insult to the public, an injury to the actor and the author, and an unwarranted depar-

“ the greater part of his life been actively engaged in  
 “ the theatrical world, he has, with great dismay,  
 “ witnessed the gradual decline of the drama of this

ture from the purpose for which the Patents of the Theatres Royal Drury Lane and Covent Garden were granted—namely, the maintaining of two distinct and rival companies of comedians, I think it due to my own respectability to state, in reply to your letter, that no consideration whatever can induce me to connect myself with either of these establishments.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

J. S. KNOWLES.”

“ To  
 A. Bunn, Esq.,  
 &c., &c.”

“ Theatre Royal, Covent Garden,  
 Sept. 23, 1833.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ It is fortunate for the interests of the two national theatres that in *your* view of their present position, you only speak the sentiments of a few individuals, disappointed by this just and necessary attempt at a restoration of the national drama.

“ I am incapable, in any situation in which I may be placed, of offering an insult to the public, or an injury to the actors ; and, as respects the authors, the union of the companies has enabled me (from the certainty of your works being better represented, and the public consequently better pleased) to propose to you £.200 for a play beyond the customary remuneration—a sum I shall always be happy to give you, notwithstanding the receipt of a letter which I think every one will admit was quite uncalled for.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

A. BUNN.”

“ To J. S. Knowles, Esq.”

*Note.*—With reference to Mr. Knowles's last letter, Mr. Pocock, the well-known dramatist, in a communication he addressed me at the

“ country from causes which your petitioner need not attempt to point out to your Most Gracious Majesty’s consideration.

“ The object of your Majesty’s most humble petitioner is to pray that your Majesty will be pleased to continue your most gracious patronage to the two National Establishments of Drury Lane and Covent Garden, and with that fostering aid your Most Gracious Majesty’s humble petitioner trusts that the revival of the British drama is not yet without hope.

“ With this view, your Majesty’s most humble petitioner has been advised by parties of long experience in the dramatic world to hazard the expedient of uniting the two companies of Drury Lane and Covent Garden ; thereby to insure to the public the only remaining opportunity of witnessing the drama properly represented. And for this purpose, your Most Gracious Majesty’s humble petitioner has embarked in the hazardous enterprise ; yet, at the same time with no view to

---

time upon other matters, thus expresses himself : “ So totally do I differ with Mr. Knowles and the wiseacre who, in making public his unwarrantable and ungracious letter to you, deprecates the adherence of authors and actors to your speculation, that I am lost in amazement at the absurdity of their arguments. In my mind it cannot admit of a doubt that actors, authors, &c., are bound to you by the strongest obligations, and would be to any man who in such times endeavours to uphold the great theatres—thereby affording them an additional market for their talent.”

“ monopoly, or to abridge the profession of the fair  
“ reward for their talent ; but, on the contrary, your  
“ petitioner feels that he should have little claim to the  
“ gracious protection he now seeks at your Majesty’s  
“ hands if such were his intention.

“ That your petitioner has endeavoured to prove  
“ by the annexed address, that the consolidation of  
“ the two theatres was the best expedient which, in  
“ the present very critical and depressed state of the  
“ national drama, could be devised for upholding it.

“ That your petitioner is fully aware, in his  
“ attempt to reform some of the abuses which have  
“ existed in these establishments, and which have  
“ caused the ruin and downfall of each successive  
“ lessee, he shall have much to contend with ; but  
“ your petitioner most humbly trusts he shall receive  
“ the protection of your Most Gracious Majesty and the  
“ public at large, if he pursue the honest and honour-  
“ able course of excluding no member of talent of  
“ either of the established companies, without first  
“ having proposed to them an adequate remuneration  
“ for their services ; nor will the effect of the scheme  
“ proposed by your Most Gracious Majesty’s peti-  
“ tioner go to the exclusion of minor talent, or  
“ subordinate persons employed, beyond the ordinary  
“ changes at the end of every season, which experience  
“ has proved to be necessary.

“ That your petitioner is aware that the recent  
“ proceedings of the Covent Garden lessee and his  
“ company may be productive of dissatisfaction on

“ the part of that body ; and in his treaty for engage-  
“ ments with some of its members they have shown  
“ no disposition (contrary, your petitioner believes, to  
“ their own interest) to forward the views of your  
“ petitioner, in the hope that your Majesty will be  
“ graciously pleased to look upon their case in such a  
“ light as to induce your Majesty to grant them a  
“ licence for a third theatre.

“ That your petitioner throws himself on your  
“ Majesty’s generosity and condescension, to take  
“ into consideration the number of persons dependent  
“ on the fate of those establishments, so long held on  
“ the faith of the Crown. And your petitioner also  
“ most humbly begs to submit to your Majesty that  
“ as NINETEEN THEATRES have lately been kept  
“ open on the same evening, any attempt on the part  
“ of the actors to establish what they call a third  
“ theatre would, in the event of their procuring a  
“ licence, patent, or charter, in this undramatic city,  
“ finally complete the ruin of all parties holding  
“ theatrical property.

“ Your petitioner, therefore, relying on your Ma-  
“ jesty’s protection, implores that your Majesty will  
“ be graciously pleased to take his case into consider-  
“ ation ; and humbly hopes that, under the circum-  
“ stances herein set forth, your Majesty will see the  
“ same just grounds for refusing to grant any licence,  
“ patent, or charter for the erection of a third  
“ theatre at this critical period, which the Lords of

“ the Privy Council saw and decided on in the year  
“ 1810.

“ And your petitioner, as in duty bound,  
“ Shall ever pray, &c., &c.”

By the following reply it will be seen, His Majesty was graciously pleased to accede to *my* prayer, and to reject that of my opponents:—

“ Lord Chamberlain’s Office,  
“ August 15, 1833.

“ SIR,

“ I am commanded by the Lord Chamberlain to  
“ inform you that your memorial has been laid before  
“ His Majesty, and it will receive the fullest attention  
“ and consideration.

“ In making this communication, I am desired by  
“ the Lord Chamberlain to express a hope you will  
“ employ as many of the Covent Garden performers  
“ as are deserving, and not confine your selection to  
“ the Drury Lane company.

“ I have the honour to be, Sir,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ To

“ T. B. MASH.”

“ Alfred Bunn, Esq.

The whole secret of the affair lay in a nutshell—the MONOPOLY, about which there was so great an outcry, was aimed at by the ACTOR, and not by the MANAGER; and His Majesty’s excellent sense and clear-sightedness saw through it instantly. It served



however to make the malcontents of the profession think Mr. Bulwer a wonderful genius for the time—at all events he thought so himself. The reader readily understand that every prospect now presented itself of, at least, a skirmish: it was better than that—it was little short of a regular pitched battle. I was assailed in every direction, and by every missile, assertion upon assertion, contumely upon contumely, and, the grand ingredient of both, falsehood upon falsehood! Caricatures, anonymous letters, authorless pamphlets, blackguardisms, and *sottises* of every description met one at the corner of every street; but with temper for a preceptor and truth for a guide, the path to follow was not so difficult as, under opposite influences, it might have been. I examined this, perused that, laughed at the one, and despised the other; and in the conflict these impressions occasioned, I left London for Paris.

## CHAPTER VII.

Mems. of a Manager, during a Continental trip—Terms on which to meet a bad dramatist—French honour, and its reward—Opinions on the novelties of the day—Mademoiselle Falcon and Madame Vestris—Death of a celebrated theatrical character—A man can never be drowned who is born to be hanged—Mr. Braham and his talent for anecdote—Opening of the patent theatres after their union—Free List—Some on it, “more free than welcome”—John Barnett and John Bull—Musical genius—First effects of the GRAND JUNCTION, and its overflow.

I WILL now endeavour to amuse my reader with a short journal, kept during a trip to the capital of our diverting neighbours, which I have found amongst my papers.

*August 6.*—Steamed to Ramsgate. Fine weather: no excuse for being sick, but there are those over-reaching rascals in the world who *will* be. Landed “after a prosperous voyage,” dined, strolled on the sea shore. What a glorious sight is that said sea, whether

“Calm or convuls’d—in breeze, or gale, or storm,  
 “Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime  
 “Dark heaving !”

If a man *has* any thought in him, it is sure to bring it out. "Household" being at Ramsgate, took a family ride with child and donkey : " we three, *pares cum paribus*"—raffled at the library, and won ; read papers—saw my correspondence with Mr. Bulwer therein. " We shall meet again at Philippi," but only on *these* terms :

Though Bulwer should both write and rail,  
I will not heed what he may say,  
If he will put in goodish bail  
On no account to write—a PLAY! \*

*August 7.*—Steamed to Calais—" cut in" with Thompson of the 87th, and we agreed to post together to Paris. Did so, as will be seen : always like to get out of Calais as speedily as possible, " because as how" Calais contrives to *get out of me* all in its power as long as I stay there. When I shall undergo the *post mortem* dissection, there will be very little of " Mary's fever" found on *my* heart.

*August 8.*—After thirty hours' posting, two dinners, one breakfast, one supper, a broil in the sun, and another with the postilion, we landed at eleven in the night, at the Hotel Windsor, Rue Rivoli. Had a hot bath—and " to bed, to bed."

*August 9.*—So—they have done justice to Napoleon at last, by replacing his statue on his immortal column. The other party say it looks more like that of an old

\* Written nearly seven years ago, before Mr. Bulwer *had* written one ; and having seen those he *has* written—my opinion is unaltered.

watchman than "an old soldier;" but "when comes such another?" Ascended the said column, to do homage; nearly smothered between the heat of the day, the ill savour of the place, and the narrowness of the staircase; but it is a glorious work of art, and the view from the balcony worth all the risk and trouble. Nevertheless, neither enthusiasm nor any other *'asm*, or *'ism* in this world will ever take me up it again. After dining at the *Café de Paris*, went to the *Opéra Comique*, to see *Le Pré aux Clercs*. What melody there is in Hérold! Casimir always was, and still is, a delightful singer, and has some delightful music to sing herein.

*August 10.*—Accepted the invitation of my friend, *Monsieur Véron* (the spirited directeur of the *Académie Royale*) to dine with him at the *Café de Paris*. "A royal spread." Met the Marquis de Lavalette, who had done me the honour of calling on me during my absence in the morning; told me of a row at the opera last night, between Colonel Gallois and Nestor Roqueplan, editor of the *Figaro*—the Colonel pulling the ribbon of the *Legion of Honor*!!! from the scribe's button-hole, and the said scribe breaking the said Colonel's head with a stick, "leaded" at the top—"when lead meets lead!" It sickens one even to nausea to think of a writer in a penny publication wearing the STAR, whose honours were conferred by Napoleon, and immortalised by the verse of Byron—

"Star of the brave, whose beam hath shed

"Such lustre o'er the quick and dead!"

But they'll fight to-morrow, I find, and as WILL. singeth, "there's honour for you!" Thermometer 92—face and every thing else in a regular blister. Got iced, and got better—went to see the ballet, and then to the "balm of hurt minds (and bodies too!)" "great nature's second course." Read *Le Pré aux Clercs*, and must see it again.

*August 11.*—Colonel Gallois and Roqueplan fought to-day in the *Bois de Meudon*: Colonel stuck scribe three times, then proposed pistols; scribe declined "that ere trifle," *et voilà l'affaire finie*. Dined "alone in my glory" at the *Rocher de Cancale*. Went afterwards to the *Porte St. Martin*, and saw a bad piece called *Trois Têtes dans un Bonnet*: thence I proceeded to the *Opéra Comique* to see *Le Pré aux Clercs* again. More pleased with it than before: it would do for *Johannes Taurus*, if his singers were but actors also.

*August 12.*—Bainbridge, M.P. for 'Taunton, favoured me with a call. Paris a pleasant place: sight of an "English gentleman," and so agreeable an one as he is, much pleasanter. Wrote to Dunn and Reynolds, (London), and to Hunter (Calais), who, being the English Courier, will secure me a berth homewards in some messenger's *calèche*, and when he comes to town I'll secure him "a front row to see the new pantomime"—quits. Can't "take it coolly" for the life of me, for with this sun even baths and ices are at a discount. Dined at Anatole's country-seat, a decent little place enough, considering that it is FRENCH, and he calls

it ENGLISH: returned at eight. Met and chatted with Torri, *en route* to Italy. Went to the *Académie Royale* to see *La Tentation*. They are trying to poke Monsieur Halevy, the composer of this opera, down the throats of the Parisians as a musical wonder of the nineteenth century; and although *les braves* have a pretty good swallow, this operation, if persisted in, will choke them. *La Tentation* is the worst piece, with the worst music and the worst dancing imaginable, but the *mise en scène* is very fine.

*August 13.*—Breakfasted with the Marquis Lavalette. Dined afterwards, by special invitation, with Mademoiselle Duvernay; met a very intelligent *compatriote* there, named Strachan, also old Vestris, the quondam *Dieu de la Danse*, and Monsieur Le Directeur Véron. Went afterwards to *L'Ambigu Comique*, to see *Le Festin de Belthaxsar*, and a precious mess of blasphemy and impiety it is! Called on Taglioni to effect an engagement, and at the same time amused her by explaining to her that one Italian artist having made a good thing in modelling Vestris's legs, another was now going to start a model of her's in opposition, and to head his advertisement LEX TALIONIS: funny world, you may depend upon it!

*August 14.*—Pretty storm—one of your regular Paris storms—thunder and lightning, “and that” (to use Ducrow's emphatic addenda to all descriptive matter) and

“The big rain comes dancing to the earth.”

Mr. Bainbridge and his brother just called. Wrote business-letters to England. Nearly sick of Paris: chatted with Monsieur Le Marquis at Madame's—ah, ha ! dined at the *Café de Paris*, and then went to the Opera to see *Robert le Diable*, and to hold official conference with Véron—*les coulisses* as full as *la salle*.

*August 15.*—Navigated the Boulevards with Charles Gore. *Mem.* to do becoming homage to “*miladi*” at two to-morrow. Busy, writing letters for the English post: as soon as they were finished, found it was not post day.

~.

“ There are more fools in this wide world

“ Than the gods ever made,”

and it seems I am one of them. Dined at Meurice's hotel, and thence proceeded to the *Cirque Olympique*: exceedingly amused with the Clown; procured models of two of his tricks—a lark between a horse and a goose produced many a *horse* laugh. Received score of *Le Pré aux Clercs* from Monsieur Troupenas, by a letter from D'Almaine. Saw in an opposite box Dimond, the dramatic author—thought he had been hanged long ago.

*August 16.*—Hard at work, writing letters to send by the Ambassador's bag. Wish I was the bearer of them: sick of Paris—but *Gustave* is not played until Monday. Tom Cooke called, on his arrival; told me a funny story (and there are few funnier than Tom's)

that I mustn't tell again. Bainbridge gave a splendid spread at *Les Trois Frères Provençaux*—best house in Paris for such an onslaught. Went to the Opera—Falcon looking charming. One may say of her, as always hath been said of Madame Vestris, “she is the best dresser on the stage:” all the rest, by comparison, are *kitchen-DRESSERS*.

*August 17.*—Paid my respects to Mrs. Charles Gore. She has an overflow of talent, and fascinating manners. Dined with Monsieur et Madame Gosselin: *he* is Madame Anatole's brother, and *she* is Mori's sister. Went afterwards to the *Théâtre du Palais Royal*, to see *Le Bon Enfant*, and a much worse piece I could not well see. Early to bed, and to read—one's only chance of picking up the crumbs of a little learning.

*August 18.*—Received letters from England. Dunn writes me word that poor old West, forty-seven years messenger to Drury Lane, has “left this 'ere world and gone to that there”—an attaché of the theatre six years before I, its present manager, came into “this breathing world!”—“I could have better spared a better man!” Dined with Cooke and Mrs. Tom, at Dioux's on the *Boulevards Italiens*. He and I afterwards went up to the *Barrière du Combat* to see a dog-fight—over when we got there. Jarvied to Tivoli—gardens full: every species of absurdity in full force on this the Sabbath day (which they do *not* “remember to keep holy”) to please these sacrilegious rascals—



Sunday is to them "the gayest of the gay." The noble Lord W \* \* \* \* \* has had a narrow escape, I perceive, from being drowned—the old adage took care of him. Hear that Farren has had a fit—very much doubt if it will make him lower his salary.

*August 19.*—Cooke breakfasted with me. We afterwards perpetrated a call on Rossini: out of town. Have offered him 20,000 francs (800*l.*) to compose an opera for our stage. Got stall for *Gustave*: dined early, and went to opera early—the said opera splendidly "got up"—music better than I was led to expect. Sure to please our gude folk, and some parts of it shall be better done. Went home to read piece, make memorandums, and then to pack up.

*August 10.*—Off for Babylon: heartily sick of *Les braves*, as these fellows call themselves and the very venials who wait upon them. Shall occupy myself *en route* in putting together a farce for the first night of one of the houses.

*August 22.*—Landed at Ramsgate from Boulogne—staid there till the next day: finished farce and—"off to town."

The difficulties which I had left behind me, on my departure for France, were somewhat lessened on my return; still I had many to encounter. Messrs. Farren and Macready (invariably designated by the late Mr. Henry Harris as the *Cock-salmon* and the *Cock-grumbler*) accepted engagements, but declined to perform, save upon particular occasions, at both houses. Then, I had "travelled out of the record" so far, as

to offer Mr. Braham an engagement, based upon the *maximum* of the two theatres, but limited as to the nights of performance—which he declined.

His rejection of my offer led to his application for, and possession of, a licence to open a theatre in King-street, Saint James's, on a spot of ground whereof he purchased the freehold, and whereon he erected the costly building now standing there, in the teeth of a formidable opposition headed by his neighbour, the late Sir Thomas Farquhar, the wealthy banker. Many of his survivors attribute the Baronet's death to the unsuccessful result of his attempt to defeat Mr. Braham's operations, as people formerly did that of Mr. Whitbread to the fatal result of his Drury Lane management, elsewhere alluded to. I wish now, as I wished at the time, that Mr. Braham was engaged in one or other of the large theatres which his genius has so long adorned, and had the outlay upon his own theatre in his pocket. The locality of the St. James's, were there none other, is a vital bar to its welfare, unless through foreign performances supported by subscription. It has neither a chance, nor a regular audience like the *Adelphi*, the *Strand*, the *Olympic*, &c., and has moreover to combat with the extension of the Haymarket licence to the 15th of January, the operations of which make a serious inroad upon the three best months of the Saint James's season.

In consequence of this extraordinary favour having been bestowed upon the *Haymarket*, the proprietors

of the minor theatres in question petitioned the Lord Chamberlain for an extension of *their* licences, for the two months following Easter; but the boon they, "in love and pleased with ruin," asked and obtained, has turned out any thing but a blessing. There is a vast difference in theatrical value between the two months of the winter, and the two months of the spring, thus respectively accorded; the former being the best, and the latter the worst, of a London season. A nabob of *Lucknow*, owing a grudge to a dependant, made him a present of some elephants—the poor fellow did not dare to refuse or dispose of the gift, and the keep of them ruined him. I do not say such was the Lord Chamberlain's object in this extension of his patronage, but *his* gift had nearly the same effect.

I have had the pleasure of being intimately acquainted with Mr. Braham for many years, am an enthusiastic admirer of his vocal abilities, and a devotee at the shrine of his general talent. Mr. Braham is gifted by nature with a powerful mind, the agreeable qualities of which have for the best part of half a century assembled at his hospitable board some of the most distinguished men of his country. He has an inexhaustible fund of humour, to which his listeners have been indebted for as much laughter as they can ever elsewhere have enjoyed;\* and, to sum up all, he

\* I could mention many excellent anecdotes which he has told me, but will content myself with recording the following:—

has arrived at that perfect state of human happiness, the possession of "honour, love, obedience, troops of " friends."

I could fill a volume with letters and communications in approval of the system about to be pursued, of uniting the two Patent Theatres, from men most distinguished by rank and learning in the country—with the opinions of the public journals, and the various testimonies of friends and strangers; but this would be taxing the reader's patience. I shall merely say, therefore, that the necessary arrangements having been made, Drury Lane theatre took the lead, and opened on Saturday, October 5th, 1833, by way of being extra legitimate, with Shakspeare's *Tempest* and Milton's *Comus*, preceded by the following address, written by my old and valued friend Mr. Beasley, than whom a cleverer or pleasanter man does not exist :

" As you are intimate with Mathews," said Braham to me one day at dinner, " tell him that a Jew came to Bristol the other day while I was staying there, and advertised for personation the whole of his (Mathews's) last entertainment. He attracted a large audience in one of the public rooms, and shortly after he commenced, his performance gave such dissatisfaction, that there was an universal cry of ' off—off '—' swindle—swindle ! ' The Jew, quite undaunted, and with a rare expression of candour that silenced the opposition, and convulsed its creators with laughter, advanced with all possible humility, and said, ' Ladish and Jentlemen, I shall not dishpoot dish business vid ye—*tish* a svindle ! ' " Those who have not heard Mr. Braham's rich delivery of the Jewish dialect, can have no idea of his humorous recital of this anecdote.

MISS TAYLOR *loquitur*.

Nay, nay ; send one else—for how can I,  
A poor weak woman, tell the reason why,  
In coalition strong, perhaps insane,  
You 've Covent Garden tack'd to Drury Lane ?  
Can I proclaim the bans between two houses  
“ Both of this parish,” and thus make them spouses ?  
Or if I do, perhaps there's some one stands,  
With voice stentorian, to forbid the bans.  
Lest such unlooked-for, such a strange collusion,  
Like many other *matches* breed confusion ;  
Of their new schemes men fear to bear the brunt,  
So boldly place a woman in the front—  
For woman's tongue (not used *too* much) may charm,  
And though we cannot conquer, we disarm.  
These are the reasons why I 'm hither sent,  
To say a word on our experiment.  
In these hard times, when every one resents  
The least increase of taxes, tithes, or rents,  
To keep one house there 's quite enough to do ;  
Then sure he 's mad who thinks of taking *two*.  
All things are thought by two heads better done,  
Yet here are joined two bodies under *one* ;  
But other proverbs in their wisdom shew,  
And say, “ Two strings are better to your bow.”  
Sometimes our manager may pull a wrong one,  
But he 's resolved he 'll never draw a long one.  
For ages past these houses have been rivals,  
In actors, plays, translations, and revivals ;  
The piece at one, the other's bills proclaim,  
Though different houses giving still the same ;  
In plays or operas, still the rivals jar,  
And every *piece* proclaimed, proclaimed a war.  
Not for your pleasure was such sad excess—  
To cut each other's throats they called success.  
To thwart a rival was their only view,

They losing all, and nothing gained by you.  
 From such a system can we deem it strange  
 If our lessee should meditate a change?  
 But now a junction seemed the only way  
 To give *us* profit, or give *you* a play.  
 To make them brothers, spouses, what you please,  
 And pull together, like the Siamese!  
 We trust our houses some success will shew,  
 And, LIKE THE GREAT GRAND JUNCTION, overflow!  
 At first aloud a thousand voices cry  
 Against what they would style monopoly—  
 The Minors meet with Majors to contend,  
 And for new theatres petitions send;  
 Trusting the government will give them plenty,  
 Since two can't thrive, they wisely ask for twenty!  
 By such petitions these unthinking elves,  
 The Minors, now would undermine themselves.  
 The scheme at first the actor's anger rouses,  
 He cries aloud, "A plague o' both your houses."  
 In hopes to gain theatrical reform,  
 And try to "Raise the wind," we've raised a storm.  
 But through this storm the manager has passed,  
 And opens with *the Tempest* at the last!  
 Yes—SHAKESPEARE's *Tempest*, joined with MILTON's *Masque*:  
 What more can the dramatic critic ask?  
 And thus you'll find through all his bold career  
 England's best poets represented here.  
 And should some melodrama tempt applause,  
 And shock the stickler for dramatic laws,  
 Of other bantlings let it meet the fate—  
 'Tis *natural* still, though not *legitimate*!  
 If for MONOPOLY some say he tries,  
 Your smiles are all he would monopolize!

Covent Garden "followed my leader" on the Mon-  
 day after, with *Pixarro*, a new farce called *My*

*Neighbour's Wife* (adapted from the French—who stole the plot from the English—by your humble servant, worthy reader!) and *Cymon*; and, in the impressive language of the ancient ballad,

“ So it was the row begun.”

Another cause for the non-abatement of the animosity with which the UNION was assailed, or rather the parson who published the bans of marriage, and eventually “solemnized” it, was, the restriction naturally placed upon the “*Free list*” of the theatres. Long before I undertook the revision of this muster-roll, it had swelled to an alarming extent, for every soul who had ever contributed even a song, prologue, or epilogue, considered himself immediately “free of the theatre;” and (recollecting that there were six hundred proprietors and renters who considered themselves equally so, and what is more could enforce their opinion), I came to the conclusion that a portion of them were “more free than welcome.” It was necessary to draw the line; to extend the courtesy as far as possible, and to intimate to those who accepted the extension, that it *was* courtesy and not right. If it could by possibility be tortured into RIGHT, “the immortal “fry” of translators and adapters that has of late years sprung up would be of itself sufficiently numerous to fill at least one circle of boxes.

The said revision gave mortal offence; but nevertheless it has been acted upon by my successors, who have had the advantage, without incurring the oblo-

quy, of the reform. My recent visit to France, and the general impression on the town that I was making great preparations for the production of Auber's opera of *Gustave*, furnished the malcontents with another pretext for the continuance of their warfare. I was now accused of the high crime and misdemeanour of encouraging foreign, at the sacrifice of native talent; a sure way of exciting John Bull's national feeling, for the moment—but *only* for the moment. Give "John" any thing to please him, and not one penny does he care if it be the invention of his greatest enemy (and in his heart there is none so great as a Frenchman), or the offspring of his most determined rival. He will perhaps be more amused by, and if not he will more liberally patronise, any thing of alien extraction—being the most unpatriotic varlet, in mere matters of taste, that crawls between heaven and earth. "John" has been told over and over again by the composers and *fanatici* of this country, that he doats upon music, and is a better judge of it, than the citizens of most other nations; but directly "John" is asked to swallow the compositions of these worthy people, he goes off to the continent, and runs riot with Rossini, Auber, Bellini, Meyerbeer, &c. Perhaps the wags will say, this is a proof of his judgment; I am content with saying that at all events it is no proof of his nationality.

With reference to both the points of discontent herein touched upon, I was addressed by Mr. John Barnett, who, for some imaginary slight, (I certainly never



intended to pass any real one upon him,) had before abused me in some of the papers, and threatened to do so again. I sent the following reply, which closed our correspondence :

“ T. R. Covent Garden,

“ Oct. 16, 1833.

“ Sir,

“ It is a matter of the most perfect indifference to me what you publish, or what pamphlets or projects you join in ; nor should I have considered it at all necessary to have replied to your letter upon the subject of a freedom to the two theatres of which I am lessee, but to contradict a statement therein contained ; *viz* : that English composers are prevented having their works performed. This is not the fact ; for I shall be most happy to receive, and give all the support I can to the talents of any and every English composer. You have no claim on me, beyond that of contempt for the falsehoods you have on a former occasion published about me ; and you may be assured of one thing, that the public cares nothing about either of us beyond the temporary gratification which our exertions afford them. They have much more to do than to read, and, with such talents as yours, you ought to have more to do than to write, any such absurdity.

I must beg to decline any further correspondence on this subject ; but whenever you have any work to submit to the public, I shall be at all times ready

to allow my theatres to be the medium of so doing, and to pay you for your labour.

Your obedient servant,

A. BUNN."

To Mr. John Barnett."

What may have been Mr. Barnett's opinion since this period, I know not; but it gratifies me to say that I subsequently had the pleasure of introducing his masterly opera of *Fair Rosamond*, and his lighter, but charming one of *Farinelli*, to an audience of his countrymen; and it will be long, in my humble opinion, before any works of equal (certainly of greater) beauties *are* introduced to them.

The first effects of the GRAND JUNCTION were now about to be realized; the resources of both theatres in opera and ballet being brought to bear upon the representation of *Gustavus the Third*, which appeared on the 16th of November, with a degree of success seldom witnessed, and calculated to silence, in a great measure, the murmurs of the few, from the approbation it elicited at the hands of the many. It certainly operated as a violent check to the proceedings of the dissatisfied; and furnishes further testimony of the truth of the old adage, that when you are hitting your adversary a rap over the knuckles, you may as well hit him a good one.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Ambassadors—foreign and otherwise—Advantages of a *tout ensemble*—the decline of Pantomime, the cause, and the loss supplied—A humorous instance of stage direction—*Gustavus* and *St. George*—Ducrow's parrot, and the Hebrew Melodies—Count D'Orsay and Mr. Kenney—Mr. Farren and Prince Talleyrand—Cabinets of St. James's and the Tuileries—The case of a wig—The best way to cut a play—Alarm at the prospect of war allayed—William Godwin—*Sardanapalus*—Lord Byron, Mrs. Mardyn—Mr. Moore—Mister William Dimond.

GUSTAVUS THE THIRD, and the glories of its *Masked Ball*, set the Cockneys in a complete fever; the town became literally *Gustave-mad*; and that grand desideratum in managerial matters, *viz.* its being unfashionable not to have seen any particular piece, was achieved. To such a pitch of fashion had the attendance to this opera reached, that I have seen on the stage, during the masquerade in the last act, between thirty and forty Peers of an evening, and have more than once numbered amongst them three foreign ambassadors.\* This species of entertainment was almost the only field open at the time, which had

\* I take this opportunity of mentioning a diplomatic anecdote, though not in connection with any of these *real* SIMON PURES! A

not been hackneyed, and for the successful prosecution of which the TALENT was to be procured. Tragedy and comedy were then, as they are now, nearly defunct—for one great reason, that the order of talent which could have sustained them is no where to be found. In the absence of such, the flashes of genius which used to keep the stage alive are lost; and thus *connoisseurs* became disappointed, and the ignorant bored to death. It ceases, then, to be a matter of surprise, that a more signal success attended this representation than the stage had for many years witnessed, by the mere effect of a *tout-ensemble*. In the production of this piece, no particular reliance was placed upon the peculiar advantage of any one performer's acting; consequently no loss could be sustained by the introduction of any unnecessary airs or extraneous dignity, which too often arises from such causes; there were no exorbitant salaries paid to any

Noble Lord, with whose friendship I have been honoured for many years, entered the green-room on one of these evenings, and seeing an apparently distinguished foreigner on a settee, asked Lord William Lennox, "Who he was?" His Lordship, up to the joke, replied, "The Turkish Ambassador: shall I introduce you?" Up they accordingly came, when the former asked his Highness's opinion of *Le bal masqué*. The ambassador spoke highly of it; but when the Noble Lord, who had long been a resident in the French capital, observed, "Oui, oui, mais ce n'est pas si bien monté qu'à Paris;" his Highness, with a sudden change of accent and language, replied, "That's all gammon, Tom!" The effect was ludicrous enough, and the familiarity only pardonable, from the Noble Lord (GRAVES) having more than once told the ambassador (BUNN) he would cut his acquaintance, if he ever called him by any other name than Tom!

histrio employed in its personation, and the outlay therefore was useful to the tradesmen, and beneficial to the *magazins*, of the theatre. Neither the illness, nor the insolence of any one could stop its career, nor in any respect mar its perfection: the result was necessarily of the highest importance to the scheme.

The good fortune thus flowing in, in Bow-street, was shortly afterwards followed up by the introduction of a different kind of novelty, in Great Russell-street. The rage for pantomime having considerably subsided since the retirement of the master spirit; its wand in fact having been broken with the broken health of its magician, Grimaldi; there seemed to be but little hope of successfully sustaining two pantomimes which, from their peculiar construction, and from the peculiar period of the year, *MUST*, despite the harmony of the combatants employed in them, be played in opposition to each other. There could be no objection, for it was the groundwork of the coalition, to pit tragedy, comedy, and farce, at the one house, against opera, ballet, and melodrama at the other; but pantomime against pantomime was unnatural and absurd, in an estate where no longer any rivalry existed. I therefore entered into an arrangement with Mr. Ducrow, for the introduction of himself, his company, and his equestrian establishment, in a spectacle to be entitled *St. George and the Dragon*, the outline of which was submitted to his practised judgment, and under his guidance was eventually moulded into a most effective piece of

pageantry. This innovation upon the customary amusements of the laughter-loving part of creation, which flock into London at this period of the year, was hailed with infinite delight, and rewarded with receipts such as no pantomime in *that* building, if in any other, had ever produced. The performance of Ducrow, as the renowned *St. George*, will be coeval with the recollection of his name; nor were his exertions<sup>d</sup> confined to the simple representation of the principal character, but devoted with all the fag of industry and exuberance of taste, to perfect the production of the piece.

Those who have merely known this extraordinary *artiste* in the pre-eminence of horsemanship, have yet to be acquainted with his display of natural acquirements, such as fall to the lot of few individuals. The observations on human nature by which he has profited are astonishing; and the excellent common sense by which he arrives at the drift of any argument is infinitely superior to the rhetoric employed by most of those with whom he argues. His knowledge of the stage is extensive—his own movements on it are graceful in the extreme—his disposition of others invariably effective—and though he occasionally carries his measures in a somewhat diverting manner\*—still he *does* carry them.

\* At one of the rehearsals of *St. George and the Dragon*, an instance of this occurred. The second act opens with the celebration of the nuptials of the Emperor's daughter—the ceremony of which is interrupted by the entrance of a neatherd, in great dismay, who announces the

The fiftieth night of *Gustavus* was celebrated, on the stage of Covent Garden Theatre, by a supper, to which the many noble supporters of that opera were invited, to meet the united company of the two theatres\*; and the fiftieth night of *St. George and the Dragon* was commemorated by a sumptuous dinner

re-appearance of the scourge of Egypt—the Dragon—on the coast. Ducrow had told the supernumeraries to rush, on hearing the intelligence, to the feet of their Monarch, for advice—then to the Chancellor, to whom the Monarch was to refer them, and from him to the altar of their gods, then burning on the stage, as advised by the said Chancellor. He might as well have spoken as much Greek to them: they set off in a smart trot to one party, then to the other, without betraying the slightest indication of the alarm they were supposed to be suffering. Ducrow got into a positive fever, and acting it for them, exclaimed, “Look here, you d——d fools! you should rush up to the King—that ‘chap there, and say ‘Old fellow, the Dragon is come, and we’re in ‘a mess, and you must get us out of it.’ The King says, ‘Go to ‘Brougham,’—then you all go up to Brougham; and he says, ‘What the d——l do I know about a Dragon? Go to your gods—’ and your gods is that lump of tow burning on that bit of timber ‘there.’” He accompanied all this with splendid pantomime action and the effect was altogether perfect.

\* Ducrow came (after his performance of *St. George* at the other theatre) in the character of a Greek chieftain; and Count D’Orsay, who was present, considering his dress incomplete, requested me to present him, on his part, with a brace of pistols and a dirk mounted in ivory and gold, which had been worn by Lord Byron, and given by his Lordship to the Count. The princely liberality and excellent heart of this distinguished nobleman are more frequently exercised than is known. One trait (amongst many that might be mentioned) relating to a popular dramatic writer may suitably be introduced in a work professing to touch on dramatic matters. Mr. Kenney was anxious to obtain a situation in the Post Office for one of his sons;

given by Mr. Ducrow on the stage of his own theatre, the humorous incidents attendant upon which would form a volume of themselves. I had sooner by far hear any one of Ducrow's very shortest speeches, than listen to all harangues of at least eleven-twelfths of the enlightened British Parliament; and there is many a member of the senate who has heard both, and will say the same. The incident which here occurred to Nathan, the composer of the Hebrew Melodies (of whom the illustrious author of the words says, in a letter to Mr. Moore, "Sun-burn Nathan! Why do you always twit me "with his vile Ebrew Nasalities?") literally convulsed the whole assembly. Nathan is partial to his own singing of his own melody, "*Jephtha's Daughter*;" a name which Ducrow confounded, or thought proper to do so, with one of a more theatrical sound; and wishing to amuse his friends, exclaimed, "Come, Mr. Nathan, tip us "*Jaffier's Daughter*." The Israelite obeyed the call, and sat down to an upright piano-forte, on the top of which a favourite and well instructed parrot, belonging to Ducrow, had perched. The moment after he had run down the keys, and warbled the first line,

"Since our country, our God, oh! my sire,"

and, being totally unacquainted with the Post Master General, he solicited Count D'Orsay's influence. He could not have applied to a kinder, or nobler patron. The Count lost not a moment in preferring the suit of the Dramatist to Lord Lichfield, and in communicating to Mr. Kenney his son's appointment.



the bird chattered out, in quite as audible a voice, "D——d stuff, d——d stuff, Polly Ducrow." I almost fancy I can even now hear the shrieks of laughter it occasioned: but Nathan, unabashed, as soon as the company could command a more serious attention, "went at it again," and striking up that beautiful line,

"And the voice of my mourning is o'er,"

the parrot gave him another touch of "Gammon! "Gammon, Polly Ducrow," and there was an end to "The Song of Salem" for that evening, at all events. I have a proper respect I hope for Mr. Nathan's musical abilities, but I am certain I should burst out into a fit of laughter, if I were ever to hear him sing again.

A very curious circumstance, amounting almost to an affair of State, took place respecting the next novelty of any importance brought out at Drury Lane theatre. Having been struck by the beauties of Monsieur Scribe's admirable comedy of *Bertrand et Raton*, during a recent visit to Paris, I took upon myself the task of translating, and adapting it to the English Stage, with a view to its immediate production. Having completed my labour, it was sent to Mr. Colman for examination, who transmitted it to the Vice-Chamberlain (the Earl of Belfast) then at Brighton, with his remark, that it contained nothing which was not admissible on our stage.

An opinion prevailing that the principal character in it (*Count Bertrand*) was intended to characterise Prince Talleyrand, at that time ambassador from

France to the Court of St. James's, some hesitation arose as to granting a licence, and on the 17th of January it was peremptorily refused. I lost no time in repairing to Brighton; having preceded my departure by a respectful memorial to the Vice Chamberlain (backed by a letter from the Examiner), stating my readiness to make such amendments and modifications as might be pointed out. I was received with great courtesy by Lord Belfast, who, after giving me audience, promised a reconsideration of the matter: and elate with that hope, I returned to London. The comedy was sent up next day to Mr. Colman, with several passages marked down for revision; for the purpose of effectually doing which, I received the following note:

“ 20th January, 1834.

“ MY DEAR B—,

“ With all we have to do, I don't see how I can  
“ return the MS., with alterations, before to-morrow.  
“ Pray dine with me to-day at half-past five—but  
“ come at four; we shall then have time to cut the  
“ play before we cut the mutton.”

“ Your's most truly,

“ G. C.”

I went, and did both; on the 23rd of January I received the official licence, and on the 8th of February the comedy was produced, with the success which had been so justly anticipated. A day or two, however, before its first representation, I was waited

upon by Sir Thomas Mash, then the Comptroller of the Lord Chamberlain's office, to inquire into the style and appearance of Mr. Farren's costume, selected for the character of the said *Count Bertrand*; an impression still existing, that the comedian was going to dress *at* the Diplomatist. I furnished Sir Thomas with a sketch of the questionable costume, which was returned to me with this note, looked forward to with no little curiosity, as I knew it was to be submitted to the King.

" My dear Sir, I have the pleasure to return your drawing, without a syllable of objection.

" Your's very truly,

" T. B. MASH."

" St. James's,

" 7th February, 1834."

Mr. Farren's wig, however, did not exactly correspond with this drawing, but was a strict copy of the head-dress of Prince Talleyrand, in the well-known engraving of *THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA*. In addition to this slight delinquency, some lines, expunged by the licenser, were restored by the players, who are sometimes apt to forget " that those who play your " Clowns should say no more than is set down for " them"—for neither of which deviations could I justly be blamed. They were, however, reported to his Majesty, who dispatched his Vice-Chamberlain to the Lords Grey and Palmerston; and they, said to be extremely irate, instantly attended the performance. In

the box exactly opposite to the one they occupied sat, however, the gentleman himself, *l'homme véritable*, His Excellency Prince Talleyrand, *in propria personâ*, and he laughed so heartily at the piece, without once exhibiting any signs of annoyance at the appearance of his supposed prototype, that the whole affair wore a most absurd aspect. I sent the following letter to the noble Vice-Chamberlain the next day, and thus terminated a singular specimen of "great cry and little wool."

" Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,  
" February 14, 1840.

" MY LORD,

" I take the liberty of requesting your acceptance  
" of a printed copy of '*The Minister and the Mercer*,'  
" trusting that the reference to your Lordship's name  
" in the Preface will not be displeasing.

" The passages bearing reference to the *Queen*  
" *Matilda*, in conjunction with *Struensée*, having  
" been entirely omitted, will, I trust, be satisfactory  
" to your Lordship. Until the evening of perform-  
" ance, I was not aware what style of wig Mr. Farren  
" meant to adopt, such matters being entirely at the  
" discretion of performers of his standard. I have  
" since mentioned to him the objections which have  
" been pointed out to me, but he has sent me word  
" that he cannot consent so to mutilate his appearance,  
" adding that it is a wig he wore two years ago in a  
" comedy, called *Lords and Commons*.

“ I trust your Lordship will therefore believe that  
 “ I have used my utmost exertions to carry into  
 “ execution your Lordship’s commands.

“ I have the honour to be, my Lord,  
 “ Your Lordship’s obliged and obedient servant,  
 “ To “ A. BUNN.”  
 “ The Earl of Belfast, &c., &c.”

To be sure very great events have before to-day proceeded from very little causes: and, as at this identical period, the Swedish Ambassador had withdrawn from the Court of the Tuilleries, because a trumpery vaudeville, then performing in Paris, entitled *Le Camarade au lit*, reflected upon the early life of his Majesty of Sweden; so it was of course apprehended that the flood-gates of war would be instantly opened in the ports of Dover and Calais, should any indignity be offered to the pericranium of the grand Plenipotentiary. But, to the amazement of the Court of St. James’s, the wisdom was found for once in the wig, or rather in the wonderful head whose “outward man” it was supposed to resemble. It soon became manifest that there was no necessity for unpadlocking the slumbering stores of the Ordnance Office, for putting an extra fleet into commission, for arousing “the saviour of nations” from the laurelled slumbers of Strathfieldsaye, for granting letters of marque, or for calling into operation all the vigilance of the Alien Office. Thank Heaven! I was not amenable for treason like to this;

and I have since thought, more than once, that his Swedish Majesty would have acted a far wiser part if he had represented that of "sovereign contempt" performed by Prince Talleyrand; and reflected that, in the earlier part of his august life, he not only had no bed-fellow (*camarade au lit*), but had no bed to lie upon. Life itself is but a toss-up, and his Swedish Majesty, when Monsieur Bernadotte, won "heads." Very funny all this; but, as is always the case, *c'est le ridicule qui tue!*

Alas! some of the principal actors of this little drama have passed away from the scene of action. His Most Gracious Majesty of blessed, George Colman of facetious, and Prince Talleyrand of doubtful, memory! One more might be added to the number, who, on presenting himself at the Privilege Office for a pass, to see the comedy, the announcement of which had created such excitement, was refused admission—WILLIAM GODWIN. He remonstrated with me upon an omission that I afterwards convinced him was no fault of mine, and I made the *amende honorable* by giving him the freedom of two theatres instead of one, which he thus acknowledged:

"No. 13, New Palace Yard,  
Westminster, February 12, 1834.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I always supposed there must have lurked in the  
"affair some mistake of the servants of the theatre.  
"To what extent however it was mistake, or to

“ what extent it might be a new regulation, I was not  
“ able to pronounce. I sincerely thank you, mean-  
“ while, for the very handsome manner in which you  
“ have conceded more than I could possibly have  
“ asked, and am pleased to think that I shall owe  
“ part of the gaiety of my declining years to your  
“ liberality.

“ I am, my dear Sir,

“ Your much obliged and obedient servant,

“ To

WILLIAM GODWIN.”

“ Alfred Bunn, Esq.,

“ T. R. Drury Lane.”

Mr. Godwin was a remarkable man ; and although during the few last years I was gratified by the pleasure of his acquaintance, he had dwindled into “ the slippered pantaloon ” of a great spirit, the author of *Caleb Williams* will always be ranked amongst our most powerful writers ; and to have contributed, in however trifling a degree, to the amusement of such a mind as his, is a source of unspeakable satisfaction, the recollection of which (to use his own delightful language), “ even at this distant period, pours a long “ stream of sunshine on my heart.”\*

It was not merely the enthusiasm I have felt, in common with my countrymen, for the writings of Lord Byron, but my thorough conviction of the dramatic tendency of his Lordship’s mind, that had made the production of some one or other of his sublime

\* St. Leon, Chapter I.

works upon the stage, a favourite theme with me. The tragedy of *Marino Faliero*, despite the miserable manner in which it was adapted and produced, and despite its being, to quote his Lordship's own words addressed to Captain Medwin, "doubly damned by Cooper, the young\* actor," as it assuredly was, still maintained a great hold upon the public mind. This event, according to the noble Poet's published correspondence, stirred up his bile in no slight degree; but as he was occupied at the very time of this controversy respecting its representation at Drury Lane, upon the composition of another, and by far the finest of his dramatic works—*Sardanapalus*—every page of his poem was in direct contradiction to the anathemas he despatched to Albemarle Street against Mr. Elliston, *courier par courier*.

The manifesto his Lordship published, stating that this last-named tragedy "was not composed with the most remote view to the stage," is so utterly at variance with a subsequent passage in that manifesto, wherein he observes, as a reason for his attempt to preserve the unities, "that with any distant departure from them there may be poetry but no drama," as to be entitled to very little credit.† The author of such

\* Young! Yes—but this was about nineteen years ago.

† We do not think these opinions very consistent; and we think that neither of them could possibly find favour with a person whose genius had a truly dramatic character. We should as soon expect an orator to compose a speech altogether unfit to be spoken. A drama is not a dialogue, but *an action*; and necessarily supposes that some-



a work as this must have had the stage and all its glories, some given performers and all their genius, perpetually floating before his eyes. No one who reads the tragedy will believe the author's assertion, that he never intended it for representation: there is an obvious study of effect in it, and its most brilliant are its most dramatic passages.

It had long been a cherished intention of mine to bring this noble play before the public, on the scene for which it was evidently composed, notwithstanding all the asseverations of the offended and illustrious writer. I did not seek to falsify his Lordship's statement, nor particularly to maintain my own judgment. My more immediate object was the gratification of the public, and I never doubted that I should attain it. I therefore placed the published tragedy in the practised hands of my old and valued friend, Mr. Reynolds, the dramatist at that time, and until my secession from Drury Lane, not merely the reader of

thing is to pass before the eyes of assembled spectators. Whatever is peculiar to its written part should derive its peculiarity from this consideration. Its style should be an accompaniment to action, and should be calculated to excite the emotions, and keep alive the attention of assembled multitudes. If Lord Byron really does not wish to impregnate his elaborate scenes with the living part of the drama—if he has no hankering after stage effect—if he is not haunted with the visible presentment of the person he has created—if in setting down a vehement invective he does not fancy the tone in which Mr. Kean would deliver it, and anticipate the long applauses of the pit, then he may be sure that neither his feelings nor his genius are in unison with the stage at all.—*Edinburgh Review*, Vol. xxxvi.

plays, but a general adviser, to whose experience and wisdom I could at all times safely apply for counsel. It was admirably arranged by him ; and it is no easy task to reduce so much radiance into one focus, that should dazzle, but should not blind. The most exquisite passages that ever were written (and this play contains many such) occasionally encumber the action.\* Had *Sardanapalus* been acted, as originally published, with all its effective situations and language, it would have occupied at least four hours in representation. It was the adapter's duty to bring it within the utmost limit that will not fatigue an audience—THREE !

A short time (the 25th March) previous to the production of this tragedy, Mr. Reynolds sent me a

\* As a proof of the difficulty, in such curtailments, of pleasing every critic, it may be stated that, in transmitting the licence for the performance of *Sardanapalus*, this remark was made by the Examiner of Plays :—

“ If it were not beyond the Examiner's province, he would recommend the restoration of the following passage, which has been erased, and contains great poetical beauty :

“ — the very first

“ Of human life must spring from woman's breast,

“ Your first small words are taught you from her lips,

“ Your tears first quenched by her, and your last sighs

“ Too often breathed out in a woman's hearing,

“ When men have shrunk from the ignoble care.”

“ How charmingly would the above lines have been uttered in the sweet and plaintive tones of the late Mrs. Jordan.

“ G. COLMAN,

“ 14th January, 1834.”

letter, which the foreign post of that morning had brought him. It ran thus :

“ Paris, March 21, 1834.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ An English newspaper has just informed me, that Lord Byron’s tragedy of *Sardanapalus* has been adapted by yourself for representation at Drury Lane. The paragraph has awakened thoughts and impulses which had long lain dormant with me. My late regretted friend ever paid me the flattering compliment, that in his portraiture of the ‘ Ionian Myrrha,’ I had been associated by his muse in every image of her trance, and that if ever the poem strayed into publicity, beyond the closet, it was his wish that the Greek girl’s sandals should be worn upon the stage by *me*. I know not how the arrangements of the theatre stand, but if they admit of such a disposition, I am ready to waive all individual feelings and interests for the moment, and to engage with the proprietors for the remainder of the *present season* ; beyond which period I could not bind myself.

“ Emolument is of no consequence to me. All I should desire is such a sum as simply would meet the additional expenses of my absence from France, during the spring—as both my establishments in Paris and the country must be maintained, without any reduction, till my return.

“ Have the courtesy, my dear sir, to ascertain this

“ point, and then (with the earliest convenience)  
 “ favour your own ‘*Albina Mandeville*’ with the  
 “ result; that is, whether the theatre desires the ar-  
 “ rangement, and if so, what sum they are willing to  
 “ propose, as a moderate reimbursement to me for  
 “ the voyage and its contingencies.

“ In case the affair should be impracticable, I have  
 “ to entreat that a *profound silence* may be observed  
 “ upon the application, and my name guarded against  
 “ any extended mention.

“ In the interim I have the honour

“ To subscribe myself, my dear sir,

“ By my old familiar name of

“ CHARLOTTE MARDYN.

“ P. S.—I am perfectly prepared in the character of  
 “ *Myrrha*. I mean not merely in the words, but in  
 “ the more recondite touches of feeling and of action,  
 “ having had each sentence impressed upon my  
 “ memory *vivâ voce* by the immortal author’s own  
 “ delivery; so that, however retrenched or transposed  
 “ portions of the dialogue may be, not the difficulty  
 “ of an hour could occur to me. Have the goodness  
 “ to address me thus:—‘à Madame La Baronne de  
 “ ‘ St. Dizier, Rue Mèromenil No. 11, Place Beau-  
 “ ‘ veau, à Paris.

“ To

“ Frederic Reynolds, Esq.

“ 49, Warren Street,

“ Fitzroy Square, Londres.”

The reputation of Lord Byron is ample apology,

were any requisite, for the detail into which this correspondence will compel me to go. The lady whose name is subscribed to the foregoing letter had been so generally considered as the cause of the separation between Lord and Lady Byron, as to render it advisable for her, at the period of that melancholy event in 1816, to write a letter to the leading Journals, utterly denying the truth of such imputation—and her assertion obtained universal belief. The letters which are the ground-work of the present observations go to falsify her former statement, and to confirm the impression which led to its publication. Whatever might be my own opinion, I considered it necessary to defer to that of others, more intimately acquainted with the noble Lord than I had had the honour to be; and amidst much doubt, and much more belief, I was advised to try the experiment. I accordingly replied to this letter, consenting to postpone the representation of *Sardanapalus*, expressing my readiness to receive the lady, and making her an offer of £.100, for eight weeks' performance, to commence on Monday, April the 7th, and to terminate on Saturday, May 31, both inclusive—to which proposition, this answer was received :

“ Paris, March the 29th, 1834.

“ SIR,

“ You obligingly offer to postpone the production  
“ of my lamented friend's tragedy for a week. In  
“ which case I can accomplish my journey and arrive  
“ in time to present myself for the rehearsal of Mon-

“ day the 7th, which would allow every means requisite for preliminary arrangements, against the actual performance upon Thursday the 10th.

“ As I mentioned to my excellent friend, Mr. Reynolds, emolument is not an object with me; nevertheless I do not wish to incur unnecessary expense, through a visit to England—£.100 could not possibly clear me. But I will propose as thus: I will engage with you absolutely for *eight weeks*, at the regular weekly salary of £.20, which I understand to be the *maximum* fixed for the two theatres. I know that the attraction of my name (under all circumstances combined) will reimburse the treasury to such an amount even upon the very first night of my performance. Still I shall be contented, and the feelings of no other performer will be outraged through any deviation from rule upon my account. Thus, if the payment of my salary commences upon the first Saturday immediately following my arrival in London, it will terminate precisely with the last day of May.

“ I have not time to expatiate upon the subject, beyond the point which is positively essential; therefore if I receive by return of post your acquiescence with the plan now proposed, I start upon the instant to redeem my pledge.

“ I have for the present to  
“ Subscribe myself, Sir, your very

“ Obligated servant,  
“ CHARLOTTE MARDYN.

“ The address precisely *as before*, but my original  
“ name must of course be the only one by which I  
“ may be known, when once the blue Neptune shall  
“ have wafted me to those white shores he loves so  
“ dearly.

“ To

“ — Bunn, Esq.

“ T. R. Drury Lane, London.”

Having confirmed Mrs. Mardyn’s proposal by a rejoinder, the result of the negociation was immediately made known to the public through the medium of the play-bills; while, in the hopes of sustaining the curiosity it excited, and at the same time of rendering as much justice as possible to the production of *Sardanapalus*, the subjoined letters passed between the celebrated “poet of all circles and idol of his own,” Mr. Moore, and the Manager:—

“ Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,

“ April 5th, 1834.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ An unexpected correspondence has sprung up be-  
“ tween Mrs. Mardyn and myself, which has led to the  
“ postponement of Lord Byron’s *Sardanapalus* till  
“ Thursday, and she plays *Ionian Myrrha*, having  
“ informed me that the noble Poet actually taught  
“ her the character! The conflicting opinions such  
“ assertion leads to, it is not now necessary to discuss.

“ She appears in the part, at this theatre, next Thursday.

“ I petitioned our mutual friend, Mr. Murray, to petition you some time since to write a prologue, ushering into the world this sublime poem of your immortal friend, thereby adding or attaching *your own* immortality to *his*. Mr. Murray told me you feared it would do no good, and you were of opinion such things seldom succeeded.

“ They are no part, or parcel of success beyond the bespeak of as much as possible for what follows; and in this case would do us vital service. I will honestly tell you what I want, and put it to you as a man of business.

“ I want a prologue of some thirty lines, which you would compose as fast as you could write, and if that prologue could make any gentle reference to the lady enacting *Myrrha* so as to bespeak a good feeling towards her, it would (being to be spoken by one of the sisterhood) go a great way with thick-headed Johnny (I mean, BULL, not MURRAY).

“ If you would condescend to do this, and accept fifty guineas for the half hour it would take you to do it, the charm will be complete.

“ Pray excuse my great frankness, and my thus treating the Temple of Genius so much like Covent Garden Market; but as a man of the world you may be induced to pardon me.

“ If I received it by post on Wednesday morning, it would be time enough.



“ If I do not herein appear to pay homage enough  
 “ to the shrine of ‘ the spark divine,’ it is not that I  
 “ feel it less, for amongst your millions of idolaters is  
 “ not to be found one greater, than

“ Your obliged, and faithful servant,

“ A. BUNN.”

“ To

“ Thomas Moore, Esq.

“ &c., &c., &c.”

“ Sloperton, April 6, 1834.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ Both from the pleasure I should feel in connect-  
 “ ing my name, however humbly, with that of Byron,  
 “ and the importance which you do me the honour to  
 “ attach to my assistance on this occasion, I should  
 “ have been most happy to undertake the task you  
 “ propose, had I the slightest confidence in my being  
 “ able to succeed in it. But I feel quite sure that  
 “ my effort would be a failure, and (as I said to our  
 “ friend Murray on the subject) the less of failures  
 “ a man perpetrates, the better. It gives me real pain,  
 “ I assure you, to reject a proposal so tempting in  
 “ itself and so liberally offered ; but I know that both  
 “ you and myself would regret my having acceded to  
 “ it. Did your people tell you the efforts I made one  
 “ night to find you at your house near the theatre?  
 “ I should have tried again, but for my short stay  
 “ in town.

"Forgive this hurried note, but I am in fear of  
"being too late for the post.

"Your's most truly,

"To

"THOMAS MOORE."

"A. Bunn, Esq.

"Theatre Royal,

"Covent Garden, London."

On the morning that Mr. Moore's negative reached  
Drury Lane theatre, I received this communication :

"Paris, Friday Morn., April 4.

"MONSIEUR,

"I am commissioned from the bedside of my dear  
"friend the Baronne (*Your Mrs. M.*) to address a  
"line that may dissipate any alarm probable to be  
"conceived out of her non-arrival in time for the  
"Monday's rehearsal. The plain fact is, that last Tues-  
"day evening she attended a *literal squeeze*, called a  
"*Literary Soirée* at the Duchesse d'Abrantes, Junot's  
"widow. The crowd was awful, and on departure,  
"she was detained in a Spitzbergen of a vestibule,  
"several minutes before her carriage could possibly  
"drive up. The consequences were a frightful sore  
"throat with inflamed eyes: her physician has but  
"this moment consented to a journey. I shall accom-  
"pany her, and we have decided to start to-morrow  
"at an early hour; sleeping at Abbeville the first  
"night, Calais the second, and crossing that disagree-  
"able channel by Monday's packet. It is possible we

“ may be detained some hours at Dover by the Customs  
“ on account of the quantity of my friend's baggage ;  
“ but *n'importe*—we trust to sleep at Canterbury and  
“ get into London during the Tuesday. Fortunately  
“ the two rehearsals will be ample for my friend—  
“ as she has merely to ascertain the curtailments and  
“ could step at once from the carriage upon the stage.  
“ She brings her dress with her complete; and as her  
“ French friends cry, when 'tis displayed, ‘ Vraiment !  
“ ‘ c'est un bijou tout à fait unique.’ ”Tis composed  
“ entirely of gossamer tissues, the vest, *sun-flower* tint  
“ —the tunic, the brightest *violet*, the true *Tyrian*  
“ dye—her sandals, zone, armlets, bracelets, &c., of  
“ party-coloured foil-stones—the arrangements superb  
“ as classic ; her *own* jewels she reserves for the head,  
“ formed into the exact tiara of Helen of Troy. At  
“ the banquet she changes the tiara for the chaplet of  
“ lotus and wild poppy, after Caffarelli's bust of the  
“ bacchante at Modena. Such was the immortal  
“ Byron's idea of the costume : nothing can exceed  
“ its imposing effect—her *entrée* must dazzle like ‘ a  
“ ‘ thing of sunbeams.’ I have a conviction that  
“ this charming woman's re-appearance will rank  
“ hereafter among the sunniest moments of the British  
“ drama. You can form no idea of the enthusiasm  
“ she feels in her voluntary task. Her recitation of  
“ Myrrha's soliloquy at the close of the first act,  
“ transcends all praise—'tis electrifying ! The alter-  
“ nations, modulations, of her voice, so novel yet so

“ natural—an *abandon* so absolute. Then her *beauty*,  
 “ now confessedly more radiant than ever ; but I curb  
 “ my pen, and will be content to gratulate by anti-  
 “ cipation yourself and the public equally upon a  
 “ *great event*.

“ Till we meet, I have the pleasure to remain (in  
 “ my friend's name),

“ Monsieur,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ A. ANNESLEY.”

“ We shall drive to an hotel in Leicester Fields.”

“ P.B.,

“ We bear letters, from a *high quarter*, to the  
 “ Duchesse di Dino ; on these we build *greatly*.”

“ A. Monsieur, Mons. Bunn,

“ Theatre Royal, Covent Garden,

“ London.”

The lady signing herself “ A. Annesley,” having read in the *Morning Chronicle* an article tending to throw some doubts on the statement put forth, that the part of *Myrrha* was written by Lord Byron for Mrs. Mardyn, addressed a remonstrance to the Editor of that paper, which he was so obliging as to possess me of, and the contents of which it is very important the reader should know—*les voilà*.

(*From a Parisian Correspondent.*)

“ A paragraph has just caught my eye, in the

“ *Morning Chronicle*, which questions the accuracy  
“ of the play-bill in announcing the part of ‘*Myrrha*,’  
“ to have been written for Mrs. Mardyn. Permit  
“ me, as a most intimate friend of that charming  
“ woman, and thoroughly acquainted with all the  
“ details of that question, to apprise you of the fact.

“ Mrs. Mardyn withdrew herself from the stage  
“ before she had completed her 24th year, ere either  
“ her charms or her talents could be said to have  
“ reached their meridian. During the subsequent years  
“ she resided entirely upon the Continent, visiting  
“ progressively every region of interest throughout  
“ Europe. In the course of her travels accident  
“ brought Lord Byron and his reputed Inamorata  
“ together. The *liaison* between them so incon-  
“ ceivably reported while in England, has long since  
“ been exploded as a fable, equally silly as it was  
“ wicked; but though love never had existed, a  
“ friendship commenced out of this chance rencontre,  
“ pure, sincere, and generous, only to be dissolved  
“ by the death of one of the parties. Byron regarded  
“ the lady, because she had suffered unjustly, and  
“ because himself had been the involuntary cause of  
“ those sufferings. At one of these interviews Mrs.  
“ M. was warmly expressing her admiration of *Sar-*  
“ *danapalus*, when Byron declared an apprehension  
“ lest some London manager should copy the outrage  
“ committed on his *Marino Faliero*, and torture the  
“ play, to fit it for a stage representation. ‘If they  
“ ‘do so,’ added he, ‘you positively must return to

“ ‘ the stage and act *Myrrha*. I could not endure a  
 “ ‘ regular stilted Tragedy Queen in the part. No,  
 “ ‘ no; your own wild, restless gazelle-like eyes only  
 “ ‘ can look the variable creature of her passions I  
 “ ‘ had imagined, vibrating alternately between pride  
 “ ‘ and tenderness, who wants to be a *heroine*, but who  
 “ ‘ finds she must be a *woman*.’ ‘ Soon after this con-  
 “ ‘ versation, Mrs. Mardyn prevailed upon the poet to  
 “ ‘ read his tragedy with her, and to impress upon her  
 “ ‘ mind his own precise idea of the character. Thus  
 “ ‘ the mystery solves itself, and the apparent contra-  
 “ ‘ diction between the two assertions in the author’s  
 “ ‘ preface, and in the manager’s *affiche*, becomes easily  
 “ ‘ reconciled.

“ ‘ Permit me to add, that Mrs. Mardyn is now to be  
 “ ‘ distinguished equally for her literary talents as for  
 “ ‘ her theatrical powers. The years of her retirement,  
 “ ‘ have been devoted to intense and persevering study,  
 “ ‘ and several of her poetic effusions have been handed  
 “ ‘ (in MSS.) round the critical salons at Paris, where  
 “ ‘ they have been pronounced exquisite *morceaux* of  
 “ ‘ elegance and fancy.

“ ‘ I feel assured, Sir, that your gallantry, as well as  
 “ ‘ your love of justice, will incline you to pardon this  
 “ ‘ intrusion on your time, and to rectify a statement  
 “ ‘ (after any mode the most convenient to you) which  
 “ ‘ seems to militate against the interests of a lovely  
 “ ‘ and accomplished woman.”

“ &c., &c., &c.”

It will be observed how studiously both the date

and place—the *when* and the *where*—“ in the course “ of her travels accident brought Lord Byron and his “ reputed inamorata together” are withheld. The tragedy of *Sardanapalus* was began by Lord Byron, on the 13th January, 1821, and finished in the May of that year. His Lordship was then living at Ravenna, from which place he removed to Pisa in the following November, thence to Genoa in September 1822, whence he sailed for Greece in July 1823; where, some months’ afterwards, he died. During the whole of this period “ the Guiccioli” was under his Lordship’s protection, and the object of his most impassioned feelings. Those who knew Lord Byron’s character, and if not that, those who know human nature, will form their own conclusions as to the probability of his having received into his sanctum, on more occasions than one, so fascinating an actress (and one who, it had been rumoured, caused the separation between him and his wife) *at the very time* he was living with another lady! Neither the correspondence nor the journal of his Lordship during the whole lapse of time here cited, even by inuendo or the remotest hint, allude to her name, or to any circumstance calculated to bear out the statement of “ A. Annesley.”

The two following letters from Mrs. Mardyn put an end to the business, as far as the lady was concerned :

“ Paris, Sunday Afternoon.

“ SIR,

“ Overwhelmed by a medley of mortifications, and

“ with a spirit absolutely prostrated from a disappointment of its fondest wish, it is my irksome, yet inevitable duty to address you.

“ On the morning of Friday last I apprised you, through a friend’s medium, that my indisposition had so far abated as to permit the commencement of my journey with the ensuing day. Either I had deceived myself as to the degree of my convalescence at that moment, or some hours afterwards I had incurred a new attack through the fatiguing process of packing my dresses, in an anti-room, where I thoughtlessly was exposed to different draughts of air. By some fatality or other, my illness returned with so sudden an excess of violence that I was forced to send for medical aid during the night. Departure at the hour proposed became impossible, still I admitted the delusion of hope up to the present moment, the latest to which I dared delay. I feel too feeble to cross the chamber without support, and the state of my throat will not allow me to swallow liquids. My medical friend assures me it must be many days, perhaps a fortnight, ere my strength can be sufficiently recruited to encounter the liabilities of my long journey. Under such a conviction, I dare not ask, nor even wish, that you should adhere to your proposals with me, or delay the production of *Sardanapalus* another day on my account. I cannot explain by language the feelings which distress me. I have already passed the Rubicon



“ of my voluntary retirement, and presented my  
“ name once more upon the broad field of public  
“ life. Yet, now at the very instant when trumpets  
“ flourish and banners are unfurled, I seem to fly  
“ ingloriously from the fight my rashness had in-  
“ voked. But it is my destiny, and my cross-grained  
“ planet is in the ascendant now. May the evil beam  
“ exhaust its malice upon *me*, and leave the *theatre*  
“ untouched in its caprice! Yes: let me hope,  
“ devoutly hope, that the delay which has already  
“ occurred, may in no respect prove prejudicial to  
“ your interests.

“ I am too weak to write more. May the success  
“ of the tragedy be everything you can desire; many  
“ names of talent will doubtless be enrolled amidst its  
“ *dramatis personæ*, but not one upon which you  
“ might have relied for zeal (whatever were the  
“ talent) more steadfastly than on that of,

“ Sir,

“ Your deeply afflicted

“ But most grateful servant,

“ CHARLOTTE MARDYN.”

“ P.S.—As soon as I can possibly venture into a  
“ carriage, I shall remove to my country house, near  
“ Fontainebleau, for a change of air.

“ To

“ — Bunn, Esq.,

“ Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London.”

“ April 16th.

“ SIR,

“ A brief letter from you was received by me on  
“ Friday, which alluded to some animadversions in  
“ the public journals upon the statement you had  
“ advanced upon my authority. I had already been  
“ apprised of the dilemma, and instantly felt it to be a  
“ duty with me to exonerate your name from even a  
“ suspicion of imposture. Therefore, without wait-  
“ ing for any hint upon the subject, I authorised a  
“ friend (being too unwell to sit up myself) to  
“ address the editor of the *Chronicle*, from whom I  
“ had understood the doubt to have emanated, with  
“ such an elucidation of the circumstance, as must  
“ entirely and for ever acquit you from all reproach.  
“ I do not see any English papers myself, but I have  
“ ascertained by sending to Galignani's, that this ex-  
“ planation was actually published upon last Wed-  
“ nesday, the very morning upon which your last  
“ was dated. Of course the *Chronicle* had not met  
“ your eye at the moment your letter was dispatched.  
“ I trust, therefore, that all which you considered  
“ necessary has already been accomplished. If, how-  
“ ever, any further statement be regarded as essential  
“ to your interests, I shall most readily afford it.

“ Most sincerely I offer my congratulations on the  
“ success of the tragedy, which I am told has been  
“ complete, and that my absence occasioned not the  
“ slightest derangement of your plans. This know-  
“ ledge has removed an intolerable weight from off

“ my spirits ; for I should have been wretched if it  
 “ had been necessary to postpone the production,  
 “ or that my personal application should have in-  
 “ volved a disappointment either to you or to the  
 “ public.

“ My health has sensibly and materially amended  
 “ within the last two days, though I am still a prisoner  
 “ to my chamber, but whether invalid or convalescent  
 “ my mind must ever remain equally impressed with  
 “ a grateful sense of your gentlemanly attention and  
 “ politeness.

“ With every wish for the prosperity of the estab-  
 “ lishment confided to so talented a director, I have  
 “ the honour to subscribe myself,

“ Sir,

“ Your very obedient servant,

“ CHARLOTTE MARDYN.”

“ To

“ — Bunn, Esq.

“ Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,

“ London.”

Notwithstanding the great success of *Sardanapalus*,\* which was produced on Thursday, April 10,

\* On the evening of the performance, Count D'Orsay, who, with the gifted—gifted alike in personal and mental advantages—Lady Blessington (both such intimate friends of the deceased illustrious author) had witnessed its success, promised me a sight of the *véritable* letter, and lava ring, presented to him by the poet, which he sent enclosed in this note :—

I was determined not to let "the Mardyn matter" die a natural death. Having about four years previously been in repeated communication with ANNE *soi-disante* COUNTESS OF ANNESLEY, it struck me that these letters were not written by her; and by a comparison of their handwriting with those of the notorious William Dimond, then a resident in Paris; (several of which were in the library of the theatre), a *posse comitatus*, appointed to investigate the business, came to the conclusion, that the whole affair was nothing else than a hoax got up by that person. I wrote word of my suspicions to a member of the Drury Lane committee at that time on a visit to the French metropolis, who confirmed them by stating, that no such persons as either St. Dizier or Dimond were known at No. 11, Rue Meroménil, (*to* which address and *from* which address our correspondence was sent and received!) and, although actively assisted by the police, he had not been able to trace out either party. A minute inquiry into the entire transaction, for which in the first instance there was not

" Mon cher Monsieur BURN,

" Je vous envoie la lettre et la bague que vous désirez voir: toutes  
 " les deux sont, selon moi, bien caractéristiques. Vous méritez,  
 " mieux que personne, de connoître tout ce qui s'attache à ce grand  
 " homme; vous l'avez prouvé par vos études passés, et la preuve  
 " présente, qui nous a enchanté à Drury Lane.

" Croyez moi

" Votre tout dévoué

" Cte. D'ORSAY."

" Samedi, 12 Avril, 1834."

time, convinced me that it was a trick : but if it was not one, the lady, then alive (and now for aught I know), never thought proper to denounce the shameful abuse of her name. Whichever conclusion was the more correct one, it is, beyond question, only a common act of justice to the reputation, personal and literary, of one of the greatest poets to which the world has ever given birth, to submit such a series of interesting documents to the general scrutiny of his countrymen, that they may at all events have an opportunity of judging for themselves.

## CHAPTER IX.

Jephtha's Vow—a rash one—How to make a splendid fortune—The Lord Chamberlain in a dilemma—Three kings—one real one, and two dummies—Mr. Braham and Mr. Macready—Mr. Liston and His Majesty—“*ego et rex meus*”—The Page and the Peer—A good performer a bad judge—Captain Fitzclarencè and his mother—How, in reality, to cast a play of Shakspeare, and to lay out a stage—Difference between profit and expenditure—House of Lords—Marquis of Clanricarde—Duke of Devonshire—Duke of Wellington—Lord John Russell—Another defeat—Saints and sinners—Lord Stanley's notions of compensation very correct.

THE impression which, during the management of Monsieur Laporte at Covent Garden theatre, the dramatic representation of the *Israelites in Egypt* had made upon the town, now led to the preparation of another sacred subject—*Jephtha's Vow*, on precisely the same scale. The musical part of the task, entrusted to that clever cobbler, Mr. Rophino Lacy,\* who had arranged its predecessor, was prepared alto-

\* I do not seek by this expression to under-rate Mr. Lacy's talents, which are considerable :—but from having, in defiance of good taste and justice, made a villainous part of the choice *morçeaux* in some of Rossini's operas, instead of giving any one complete, he

gether with great attention; and its announcement continued before the public, until the day preceding its proposed performance, when it was suddenly withdrawn. It is a very extraordinary circumstance, that a repetition of the *Israelites in Egypt*, which had been so highly popular the preceding season, was this year interdicted; and yet the very same power which issued that interdiction, gave a licence for the representation of *Jephtha's Vow*. Mr. Lacy and others strenuously advised me to announce, that the licence for the former Oratorio having been revoked, it would be presented *without* action; but that a licence for the latter one having been granted, it would be presented *with* action. In times like these, there can be little doubt that an announcement of such glaring incongruity would have drawn on the disposing powers a considerable portion of very deserved ridicule; but in exposing them to its test, the manager would be exposing himself to their resentment.

I can perfectly understand, that the Lord Chamberlain of the day had a very difficult game to play—for, by refusing a licence for the present, he would exhibit the impropriety of having granted one for the past; and by granting a licence at all, he would be

thinks himself on a par with that renowned composer; thereby verifying the remark, that a speedy fortune might be made, by purchasing such people, at what *you* think of them, and by selling them, at what they think of *themselves*.

committing an offence against the religious feelings of a great portion of the community. The error, in my humble judgment, was, blowing hot and cold with the same breath—he should either have peremptorily prohibited, or unhesitatingly granted, both.\* There can be no question but the personation of sacred characters, however favourably received by the mob, gave a great shock to the feelings of all serious people; and I very much regret that I ever entertained the idea. The error, if it was one, was however so far redeemed, that when, as late as the eleventh hour, it was pointed out to me by persons high in authority how displeasing even the announcement

\* It may be as well to state, for the benefit of the rising generation of managers, that the question *pro futuro* was disposed of, by the receipt of this official communication :—

“ Lord Chamberlain's Office,

“ February 18th, 1834.

“ SIR,

“ I have to acquaint you that after this year no Oratorios can be permitted in Lent of the nature of those now performing at Covent Garden theatre. It is therefore to be understood that the licences granted for Oratorios to be represented in character and with scenery and decorations must cease to be available at the close of the present season.

“ I am,

“ Sir,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ BELFAST,

“ Vice-Chamberlain.”

“ To the Manager of the Theatre Royal

“ Covent Garden.”



had been, I did not hesitate one moment in conceding the point, at all risk of the liabilities I had incurred by preparatory arrangements.

It is not necessary, and even if it *were* I should not consider myself at liberty, to mention by name the parties with whom I held conference on the subject. I felt it an equal pleasure and duty to meet their wishes, and consult their feelings; and I never have, and never mean to enlarge upon the subject. The disappointment to the public did not appear to me to be very serious, and that to the performers shared the fate of things, which being "without remedy should be without regard." Although expressly engaged for the principal character in this Oratorio, Braham readily consented either to forego such engagement, or to extend it to other performances, humorously writing word, that "he was willing to fight for me to the last drop of—THE CURTAIN."

It was not altogether clear that the contention which had thus arisen, wherein the Church and the Stage were at cross purposes, might have been unpalatable to the Court; for, with all the spirit of liberality which regulated its opinions and its movements, the utmost respect and veneration was always maintained for the religious observations of the country. It was not, therefore, thoroughly without apprehension that I received, some time afterwards, intimation of a visit from one of our highest officers of state: and on his Lordship's arrival, I am not

prepared to swear that my face was not as white—as the boxbook whenever Farren acts. My fears, however, were very soon dispelled, for the intelligence, of which this nobleman was the bearer, speedily convinced me that, by the line of conduct adopted in respect of *Jephtha's Vow*, I had not at all events incurred the Royal displeasure.

Their Majesties were graciously pleased to signify, through their Chamberlain, that Drury Lane theatre would be honoured with a state visit on the 24th April, and Covent Garden theatre with one on the 1st of May.

Have I not, reader, already told you that “there is no tyrant like a player-king?” I will now prove it to you. The actual monarch of the British Empire condescendingly commanded the supposed monarch of the British drama to command “His Majesty’s servants,” to play the *School for Scandal* and *Simpson and Co.* at the one house, and *The Duenna*, *My Neighbour's Wife*, and *Turning the Tables*, at the other. With the view of representing the best modern comedy of which the stage is in possession, in the best possible manner, all the leading performers of the two theatres were cast in it, and, with one exception, they all played in it—that exception was—Mr. Macready, whom no argument nor request could prevail upon to appear in *Joseph Surface*, although he had so often performed the character before. A journal of the morning following the Royal visit, thus alludes to this subject: “We cannot avoid mentioning

“ a point which was the general subject of conversation last evening, *viz.* that Braham volunteered his gratuitous services, and that Macready declined to play *Joseph Surface* in the *School for Scandal* before his Sovereign. That is what we call ‘sovereign contempt.’ But the onus falls on the mimic, and not on the Monarch. What sad nonsense this is. With all the respect we can possibly have for the art and artist, it is a fact requiring no comment, that as they both depend on the breath of the King, his very breath should summon them into action. We do not absolutely think a tragedian should be required to dance on the tight-rope, or a singer to warble with a worsted stocking in his mouth; but beyond those peculiarities, we think they are bound to do any thing in their power to contribute to the amusement of the King, by whom they live, and move, and have their being.” Beyond these observations little need, or indeed can be said. In the other instance, the entertainments were announced precisely in the order commanded by His Majesty, by a letter from the Vice-Chamberlain now in my possession; and without directions from the Court, I dared not alter the arranged routine of the performances. With a thorough contempt, it would seem, for either the authority of the real monarch, or the duty of the assumed one, this letter was addressed to me :—

“ Monday, April 28, 1834.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I perceive by the advertisements that *Turning*

" *the Tables* is to be performed as the last piece on Thursday next ; this I trust will not be persisted in, otherwise I must decline the honour of appearing before His Majesty so late in the evening.

" Your's, &c.

" To

" J. LISTON."

" A. Bunn, Esq., &c. &c. &c."

Now pray who is the KING, in all this business? Mr. Liston had 20*l.* for playing in *Turning the Tables*, commanded by His Majesty to be the last entertainment of the evening ; and Mr. Liston\* says " if his Majesty (for His letter implies as much) persists in it, I decline the honour of appearing before him so late in the evening." It is not " too late in the evening" for the King of England to sit in his private box, but it is " too late for one of His Majesty's servants" to appear on the stage to amuse him ! Surely this is carrying out the *Wolseyan* doctrine of "*Ego et rex meus*," a little too far. I say

\* On the occasion of this visit, Mr. Liston and myself were conversing in the anti-room of the Royal box, with a nobleman attached to the Household, when one of the pages, passing by and not seeing his lordship, slapped the comedian on the back, ejaculating, " D'y'e think you 'll make him laugh to-night ? He was devilish stupid at dinner !" I cannot now determine which created the greatest roar, the face of Mr. Liston, or that of the lacquey on perceiving the noble lord, before whom he had so committed himself, respecting his illustrious master. If the reader never saw the face of a dignified performer, when reminded that he was nothing more *than* a performer, he has a treat to come.

nothing about the unhappy wretch of a manager, and his 20l.—they are not worth bestowing a thought upon : but it is a question whether such monstrous consequence as this should be assumed, in opposition to the pleasure of a crowned head. It is almost needless to observe, that, on stating as delicately as possible the subject to the Lord Chamberlain, the nonsensical alteration was made; but it is as well to let the reader into the secret of the whole business. The letter may convey the idea of its writer not being strong enough in health to be out so late at night or that he was engaged at home, or elsewhere; but the actual meaning of it is, “Don’t you think “ that I’m coming on the stage at half-past eleven “ o’clock at night, when His Majesty, who has been “ so heartily laughing at the two preceding pieces, “ will not have a titter left for me.” Talk for a thousand years, and the latent meaning will be found to be this, and nothing else.

As a proof how erroneous the opinions of a performer too frequently are, this fact may be mentioned ; that, at this time I perpetrated, in conjunction with my friend Kenney, a farce called *A Good-looking Fellow*, in the performance of which I was anxious to have the services of this before-named delightful comedian. After slightly alluding to my share of the authorship, and highly eulogising that of my *collaborateur*, I mentioned the opinion of two other practical judges as to its points, in hopes of per-

suading him to play the leading character. His answer will speak for itself :—

“ Brompton, April 7, 1834.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I have read the piece very attentively, and regret  
 “ that I cannot concur with Messrs. Harris, Rey-  
 “ nolds, Kenney, and yourself, as to its merits. *My*  
 “ opinion is that it would be inevitably damned in  
 “ less than a quarter of an hour ; and as I really  
 “ lack the courage to risk being pelted off the stage,  
 “ I must beg to decline the acquaintance of *Mr.*  
 “ *Narcissus Briggs*.

“ Your's truly,

“ To

“ J. LISTON.”

“ A Bunn, Esq.”

Very facetious, but not very prophetic ; for the farce was received (in the hands of Mr. Harley) with roars of laughter, and was played twenty-six nights, notwithstanding the advanced period of the season at which it first appeared.

It is delightful to pass from mummeries like these to the freshness of human nature, unalloyed by worldly consideration, and unchecked by worldly advancement. Captain Lord Frederick Fitzclarence, who was on this occasion in attendance upon his royal father, called me out of the green-room, and with a considerable degree of excitement said, “ Bunn, I have

“ not been behind the scenes of this theatre since the last evening my dear mother performed here, and” (here his Lordship took me by the arm, walked down the long passage on that side of the house, and kicked open the dressing-room door at the end of it)—“ that is the room in which she used to dress. I came with her almost every night, long, long before I wore any of these gew-gaws” (pointing to his uniform and its decorations). “ Excuse my emotion” (passing his hand over his eyes) “ I could not help, and to tell you the truth, I could not resist being here this evening, but I never mean to come again. I was happier then than, with all the enjoyments of life, I have ever been since.”

The temporary astonishment of the performers thus suddenly broken in upon at their labours of the toilet was lost sight of in the admiration of those to whom this charming touch of nature was communicated. What are all the pomps and vanities of this world of strife, when placed in comparison with the pure feelings of early life, “ unmixed with baser matter ?”—and ah ! how more really enviable the filial feelings of “ Frederick Fitzclarence,” than all the gorgeous paraphernalia glittering in the person of one of His Majesty’s *Aides-de-Camp* ?

“ The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong,” as hath been sung in the olden times, and proved in later ones. In hopes of following up the success which had thus far attended our exertions

to please, arrangements were entered into with some of the most eminent dancers from Paris, for the production of a new ballet at Covent Garden theatre; while the second part of Shakspeare's *King Henry the Fourth* was brought forward for the first time in the present Drury Lane theatre, and its preparation was aided by the introduction, after the Coronation of *Henry the Fifth*, of A GRAND MUSICAL FESTIVAL, in humble anticipation of the one then about to take place in Westminster Abbey. At this festival, the following singers, of great and small renown, assisted: Grisi! Rubini! Tamburini! Braham! Ivanoff! H. Phillips! Wilson! Templeton! Seguin! Bedford! Martyn! Ransford! Inverarity! H. Cawse! and Shirreff! which the late Mori led, and the living Tom Cooke conducted!

We have not (pardon the vanity, *Messieurs et Mesdames*, if there be any) seen any array of talent like this since, and it is my private opinion that it will be some time before we shall again see as much assembled together.

These undertakings were not altogether so profitable as might have been expected; for, do what you will, your public is not to be relied upon to too great an extent; and, as after Easter nothing short of Herculean exertion can bring in any sufficient quantity of the family of BULL, great expense must thereby be incurred, and the outlay must inevitably exceed the income. Talk of the quackery of "a powerful cast of



the principal characters of Shakspeare's plays," which, within this year or two has taken possession of the Cockneys' intellects ! why this splendid play was supported by Messrs. Macready, Cooper, Warde, W. Farren, Dowton, Harley, Blanchard, Webster, and Mrs. C. Jones ! Has any theatre exhibited a "cast" like this since, and can both the patent theatres put together exhibit such an one now ? What then is the meaning of all this *charlatanerie* about Shakspeare and the National Drama, practised by a few critical puppies of the past two seasons ?

That their *coryphæus* has exhibited no play of Shakspeare with one-half such an effective force as this is certain. But all this mummery is daily finding its level ; and people, thinking themselves neither more amused nor instructed than formerly, begin to discover that they have all this time been taking a mere Stephano for a god.

The slight decline that the advance of the season now brought about was followed by a much more important difficulty, that again threatened to attack the security of our position. The defeat which Mr. Bulwer's bill had experienced in the last Session of Parliament had rather sharpened than dulled the edge of its supporters' hostility towards the interests of the patent theatres. Without going at first through the formula of the House of Commons, the Marquis of Clanricarde undertook to work his way with it, to the best of his ability in the House of Lords ;

and some week or two, therefore, before his Lordship's motion came on in that assembly, it was absolutely necessary that all parties connected with those establishments should use their utmost exertions to bring about its second rejection.\*

The time and what assistance I could render the theatres in the Cabinet or on the stage, were thus seriously encroached upon by the operations going on against their very existence in another sphere of action. Unluckily, the Chairman of the Drury Lane Committee, the Earl of Glengall, was in Paris; and although great support was obtained by virtue of his Lordship's written communications with his brother Peers, even more might have been effected by the actual presence of one whose urbanity of manners, tact, and intellect, could at once conciliate animosity, and command adherence.

The first and most important measure for adoption was to submit the case and all its bearings to the calm consideration of the Lord Chamberlain, from whom, in the person of His Grace the Duke of Devonshire, it was sure to receive the utmost and the promptest attention. His Grace received it with the courtesy which has ever distinguished him. This was the representation made:

\* At an interview with which I was favoured by Lord John Russell, I took the liberty of pointing out to his Lordship the great stake his father held in the two theatres—deriving a ground-rent of nearly four thousand a-year, besides the free occupation of the best private box, in each of them; but he was inflexible.

The following remarks upon the Dramatic Performance Bill recently introduced into the House of Lords are respectfully submitted to his Grace the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Chamberlain of His Majesty's Household, by Alfred Bunn, Lessee of the Theatres Royal Drury Lane and Covent Garden.

The principle upon which this bill is founded is in itself an erroneous one, inasmuch as the increase of the population since the passing of the 10th of George II., c. 28, has been more than met by a corresponding increase in the number of theatres, there being at present in London and its immediate vicinity no less than TWENTY-TWO OR THREE THEATRES, (the greater part of them now open) viz. :

- |                    |                         |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 King's Theatre,  | 13 Pavilion,            |
| 2 Drury Lane,      | 14 Garrick,             |
| 3 Covent Garden,   | 15 City Theatre,        |
| 4 Haymarket,       | 16 Tooley Street,       |
| 5 Adelphi,         | 17 Kensington,          |
| 6 Olympic,         | 18 Windmill Street,     |
| 7 Astley's,        | 19 Vauxhall,            |
| 8 Surrey,          | 20 Leicester Square,    |
| 9 Victoria,        | 21 Pimlico,             |
| 10 Sadler's Wells, | 22 Strand,              |
| 11 The Queen's,    | 23 English Opera House, |
| 12 Sans Souci,     | (now building).         |

Exclusive of this important consideration, this recited number of theatres having opened to the aspirants to the dramatic art so wide a field for the display of their powers under delusive promises or

hopes of gain, the art itself has fallen into comparative decay, and so reduced the quantity of talent, that there are not performers enough to be found, of the slightest pretensions, to work even half of the said recited theatres.

The "restrictions" upon dramatic performances introduced into the bill, as a further reason for the alleged necessity of passing it, cannot be said to exist, inasmuch as there are only two theatres out of the foregoing number (viz., Astley's and Vauxhall), in which *every* species of dramatic entertainment (particularly that classed "The Legitimate Drama,") has not been nightly performed.

The Lords of the Privy Council, in the year 1810, refused to grant a licence for even a *third* theatre. In 1831 the present Lord Chancellor, his honour the Vice-Chancellor, the Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, and Mr. Justice James Parke, decided that the entire power by law of granting a licence for erecting any additional theatres was vested in His Majesty, and recommended to His Majesty to confine the licence of the English Opera House to six months. The licence of this theatre and the Haymarket were subsequently (last year) extended to eight months, and so ruinous to the proprietors was the use of this extension that it has since been altogether abandoned.

In the autumn of last year a memorial was presented to the Throne, praying for licence to erect a third theatre, with which prayer His Most Gracious

Majesty did not think proper to comply, and then, at the same time an humble petition to the Throne, from the present applicant, was presented through your Grace, praying that no such licence might be granted, the prayer of the petitioner was most graciously considered.

The present applicant therefore most respectfully submits to your Grace that His Majesty having so recently, in his most gracious wisdom, thought proper to refuse his royal licence for erecting even a *third* theatre, this attempt to give a general licence for so MANY ought not to be maintained, inasmuch as, exclusive of all other considerations, it passes by altogether the royal prerogative.

The present applicant therefore most respectfully begs to point out to your Grace that this bill is in substance a fac simile of the destructive one introduced last year into the House of Commons by Mr. Bulwer, making it a matter of *compulsion*, and not of *discretion*, with the Lord Chamberlain, the granting of all licences for which any application is preferred to his Lordship. The present applicant argued this point with Mr. Bulwer at the time, and suggested that, if passed at all, the word "discretionary" should be substituted—a point subsequently taken up by Lords Melbourne and Wynford in the House of Lords, previous to the bills being rejected from that House—but Mr. Bulwer would not hear of such substitution.

The present applicant begs leave most respectfully

to state to your Grace that in obedience to your Grace's wishes, conveyed in Mr. Mash's letter of the 15th of last August, he has, during the present season, equally employed the Covent Garden and Drury Lane Companies; that he made offers to all performers formerly attached to either house, and that any rejection of his offers has been their own act and deed, as the various letters he can submit to your Grace will show. The junction of the two theatres has totally defeated the outcry about "monopoly," for he has purposely avoided the prosecution of parties in other theatres offending against the laws, has given employment to all persons deserving and desirous of having it, and has also been enabled to give them the full period of salary which they formerly had, but of which the reverses of late years have deprived them. He has also availed himself of all the literary assistance he could obtain, by giving employment to all the principal authors of the country, and has endeavoured, as far as he could, to distribute the patronage of the public amongst the claimants on the two National Theatres.

As the passing of the bill in question would entirely ruin his speculation, defeat the best purposes of the drama, and the prospects of its professors, annul the leases of the two patent theatres, and totally ruin their proprietors, he humbly submits these points to your Grace's consideration; indulging a hope of the enjoyment of that protection and support which your

Grace was pleased to promise him in Mr. Currie's letter of the 9th of last August.\* Application was then made to one, to whom no application, where right or justice, property or character, are at all involved, was ever made in vain—to the DUKE OF WELLINGTON, from whom the subjoined reply was instantly returned:—

“ The Duke of Wellington presents his compliments to Mr. Bunn.

“ The Duke suggests that before he should see Mr. Bunn, that gentleman would be so kind as to send him any information which he might think useful

\* This letter, being a reply to one I had taken the liberty of submitting to this enlightened nobleman, explanatory of the steps that had been taken, in the hopes of securing a majority in the House of Lords, I here subjoin :

“ Old Palace Yard,

“ 9th August, 1833.

“ SIR,

“ I laid your letter before the Duke of Devonshire when he passed through town to Chatsworth, and he desired me to say that he is sensible of your attention, and in acknowledging the receipt of your letter to his Grace, to state that it will always give him pleasure to attend to any communication you may make on the subject of the two patent Theatres, whose interest and success he must always entertain an anxious desire to promote.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Your most obedient Servant,

“ B. CURRY.”

“ To A. Bunn, Esq.

“ &c. &c. &c.”

“ to enlighten the Duke’s judgment on the subject  
 “ of the Theatrical Bill.

“ London, June 16, 1834.”

The original letter, containing these few words, shall never go out of my possession ; nor can the recollection of his Grace’s affability, judgment, and clear view of the case, at the interview with which he honoured me, ever fade from my memory. The bill thus supported was thrown out a second time in the House of Lords, by a majority of fourteen ; and with this repeated defeat died away all further attempt to enlist the aid of Parliament in such unworthy proceedings. Divested of any petty or personal feelings involved in this controversy, if such it may be called, it could not reasonably be supposed, even in days like these, upon which we are fallen, that the legislature would sanction the passing of a bill in direct violation of the NATIONAL FAITH.

In the first place, as respects the two patent Theatres, nearly ONE MILLION OF MONEY has been expended upon them, through a sole reliance on the integrity of the Crown, held inviolable since Charles the Second. It has been, moreover, admitted—and no one maintained such argument more strongly than Mr. (now Lord) Stanley in the previous session, in his remarkable speech on the Slavery Emancipation Bill—that, BY THE CONSTITUTION OF THIS COUNTRY, NO MAN CAN BE DEPRIVED OF HIS PROPERTY WITHOUT COMPENSATION.



One kind of property has the same claim on the equity and justice of Parliament as any other : and if a proposition had been made of holding out to the proprietors a reasonable indemnification for the loss of their rights, as was done in the Emancipation case, the affair would have assumed a different aspect ; nor can there be any rational cause assigned why, if TWENTY MILLIONS were voted by the British Senate to please a given quantity of saints, ONE MILLION might not have been given to indemnify a given quantity of sinners. This is the real English of the transaction, torture it into whatever shape you may. The civil war, which at one time threatened to be a very *uncivil* one, was however put an end to, and matters resumed the even tenor of their way, until the beginning of July, and the ONE HUNDREDth REPRESENTATION of *Gustavus* brought the first season of the UNION to a close.

Has there not been already exhibited (to say nothing of what is to come, and “the worst remains behind”) enough of the difficulties which a manager has to battle against, to bear out the assertion already advanced, that the bed he reposes upon is *not* “a bed of roses ?” Has the reader any doubt that his sovereignty is by no means an absolute one—that he has subjects whose treason no arm of his laws, or those of his country, can check or punish—that the many faults of which he stands accused, from being the only tangible person in authority public opinion can be directed against, may be traced with truth to

the doors of other people rather than to his own? If he has any doubts still left upon the subject, only let him muster up patience to read on, and he may depend upon it they will speedily be dispelled.

## CHAPTER X.

A visit to Germany, and its theatres—Advantages of a Dutch town—Meat regulated by quantity rather than quality—Arnheim—Lord Howick—Mrs. Trollope's ideas of comfort—Professor Livius at Dusseldorf—The value of Kings and Kings' bones—the Rhine—a case of Rhino—A touch of Poetry—Distance between the "*diet of worms*," and a cold chicken—singular rencontre of three singular characters—Studying German—Heidelberg and its glories—Strasburgh and its *pâtés*—Mr. Charles Kemble—Reduced prices, and their consequences—Young actors in Shakspeare's plays—Mr. Forrest—Mr. Murray—Mr. Bishop—Manfred—The Morning Chronicle—Payne Collier—Pierce Egan.

WE will have a little more journalising now, if my enduring reader has no objection. Beating about on the ocean is pleasanter any day than being beaten about in either House of Parliament; so, having got through the breezes of the latter, and the fineness of the weather holding out no threat of any of the former, I determined upon an inspection of some of the theatres of Germany, to see if any novelty might be procured for the next season. It is agreeable to oneself, if the recital be not so to others, to skim over the surface of the world, and after dipping a feather of

your pinion here and there, to record some portion of that world's doings.

*July 23.*—Left Tower Stairs precisely at 7 A.M.—(as the nauticals have it)—and after a voyage remarkable for nothing but “a calm profound,” few passengers, and no sickness, reached *Rotterdam*

*July 24*, at a quarter past 6 A.M.: a town, distinguished by canals in the place of streets, and where to call a coach is to take a boat. The *Hotel des Bains*, or New Bath Hotel, is moderately clean and comparatively cheap, in this dearest and dirtiest of all countries I have *yet* been through. Whether an Englishman pays something extra for his recent neutrality, I know not; but he certainly pays more than any other person. Heavy rain all day, as if there was not water enough here already. Dined at *table d'hôte* at 4; an unusual quantity of meat of various kinds put upon the board, without any particular fashion, but some of it of a *very* particular “odeur.” Early to bed, “Why for?” Because I have early to rise for to-morrow’s steam-boat. A man need not concern himself about “throwing away his dirty water” here, because he could not “get any clean,” if he waited a twelve-month for it.

*July 25.*—Left *Rotterdam* for *Cologne* at 5 A.M.—breakfasted and dined on board; both of them extra bad, and extra dear. Reached a rascally town called *Arnheim*, where, like Albert Beiling at *Schoonhoven*, one might be buried alive and without the assistance of a Jacqueline of Bavaria. Turned out for the night,

—and after a long search and sundry rejections, we found beds at what Mrs. Trollope calls that “unconspicuous but comfortable!” inn, the *Hôtel des Pays Bas*: every one has his, or her, own ideas of comfort! We had damp beds to sleep in—cold soles, fresh eggs, *un*-fresh ham, and lumps of veal, to eat, in a ground-floor room, without carpet, curtain, or glass. Hitherto we have had little other meat *than* veal, a proof that all the CALVES *are* on the Continent! If this be the fare that made Mrs. Trollope so “comfortable,” she is very easily satisfied. Left this horrid hole at 5 o'clock the next morning, and, proceeding within hail of the banks of the same flat and uninteresting country which has been inflicted upon us since we left *Rotterdam*, we stopped, after about twelve hours' sail, to drop one Captain Gibson, wife, and party (river-sick and love-sick) at Wessel. After passing the bridge of boats, the STREAM was so much stronger than the STEAM, that, upon the principle of the crabs, we went backwards for half an hour.—Reached *Dusseldorf* at a quarter past 6 the next morning (July 27) where we landed General de Rovère van Brugel, of the Hague, travelling with his sisters into Prussia. 'Twould be impossible to meet in all its vast dominions with a more intelligent or gentlemanly man. He gave me a pressing invitation to this famous city of the House of Orange. Barham Livius either *has* established, or is about *to* establish, himself at *Dusseldorf*, to give lessons in music—he should take 'em first. To the cathedral to hear mass—nothing

but a solemn mockery, in which religion and roguery were trying to get the start of one another, and the odds were greatly in favour of the latter. Here also we disembarked Lord Viscount Howick, who had steamed with us from London: not surprised at his Lordship's apparent anxiety to get rid of England, the said England having just got rid of him and his family, oh dear! oh dear,

“ To think that yon fair isle should be

“ Ruled o'er by such as them and thee,”

is a pill that is remarkably difficult to swallow—there are those who say *le bon temps viendra*, but it's a long time about it.

• *July 27.*—Reached *Cologne* at half-past 4, P.M.; after a long, a hot, and a tedious steaming. Were housed at the *Rheinberg*—a most comfortable and reasonable hotel.—“ Set to” on a washing match, and then set off to the cathedral, which is a rare mixture of splendour and barbarism. They asked me 15 francs to see the relics of “ The Three Kings,” which is just 14 francs more than *I* would give to see all the kings living, and for the relics of most that are dead. To be sure, the bones beneath the willow of *St. Helena* are worth a trifle more, particularly if they were but reposing under the base of the column in the *Place Vendôme*! Very sorry I arrived too late one day, and started too early the next, to see *The Martyrdom of St. Peter* by Rubens, despite the opinion of Sir Joshua Reynolds. The first day on the Rhine disappointed

me much ; weather intolerably hot—packet intolerably full—no less than four newly married couples on board, making great fools of themselves. Dined on deck—very cheap and very good. Reach *Coblentz* at 7 of the evening chime. *La Belle Vue* hotel quite full—got bad housing, but civil treatment, at the *Hôtel des Treves*, and if there had been neither, the very sight of

“ Ehrenbreitstein, with her shattered wall,  
“ Black with the miner’s blast,”

would have compensated—save and except that her wall now is neither “ shattered ” nor “ black,” having long since been white-washed and put into order.

*July 28.*—The passage to *Mayence* is full of beauty ; and although the views on the Rhine, in this their “ whereabouts ” are not at all to be compared, in my humble opinion, to Scotland and Wales generally—yet the quondam “ robber nest ” of *Rheinfels* and the town of *St. Goar*, upon which it looks down are such,

“ That Fancy never could have drawn,  
“ And never can restore,”

as Parson Wolfe, of pious and poetical memory, hath sung. In passing *Caub* one can almost fancy—at least dream—one hears the joyous shout of the enraptured Prussian, on his first beholding the river, and what may be supposed (at least *I* supposed it) to be the exulting song of the home-returning German, as he once more gazed upon

THE RHINE ! THE RHINE !

## " THE RHINE ! THE RHINE !"

## 1.

The Rhine ! the Rhine !  
Oh, the flowing Rhine,  
Is the river of all for me !  
As with rapid course  
It leaps from its source,  
And bounds to the mightier sea !

## 2.

By crag and dale,  
And without a sail,  
Or the breath of a single breeze ;  
O'er its tide your boat  
May as swiftly float,  
As if wafted by both of these.

## 3.

From each verdant shore  
The mountains pour  
Their glorious stream of the vine ;  
By whose deathless fame  
It has won the name  
Of the noble " father of wine !"

## 4.

When the feudal frown  
Of its chiefs looked down,  
From the halls of their bright array,  
As it were to chide  
The presumptive tide,  
That would never a chief obey :



5.

Still on it flowed,  
 For it never owed  
     The allegiance by mortals won ;  
 Yet these lords of clay  
 Are all passed away,  
     And the mighty Rhine rolls on !

*Chorus*—The Rhine ! the Rhine, &c.

there, the gods have made me poetical to-day, such as it is. Reached *Mayence* at six : the *Rheinischer Hof* being the worst inn, we were lucky enough to pitch upon it. Slept—breakfasted off a “shy” fowl, strongly symptomatic of the “*diet of worms*,” though the said *WORMS* is twenty-four good English miles out of the smell thereof.

*July 30.*—“Bound for *Frankfort*, your honour,” where I deposited myself about half past two of the day. I don’t know how the rest of mankind feel at this present writing, but the literally hot air, Rhenish wine, and Seltzer-water, have played the deuce with my corporeal system. Must lie down, because I must go to the theatre. *Did* go—saw Hérold’s opera of *Zampa* beautifully done : they have here what we want there (London), the *tout ensemble*—no opera, nor anything else without it. Wild (*i* or *y*, which is it?) is the best singing-actor I ever heard or saw. Company and orchestra of *la première qualité*. Went into a public box by the merest accident, and who should be sitting in the front row of it, but Mr. Frederick Yates, his wife, and Charles Young, the tragicide—went into the saloon for a lot of ice, and who should

be there on the same errand, but Johannes Brunton, Mrs. Yates's father. Jack is a capital fellow—his laugh is worth an annuity, particularly on the first night of a new comedy. Introduced to Kock, the Consul and Banker, to whom in both capacities I had letters: he is one of earth's "good boys."

*July 31.*—Bathed in the *Main*, a matter of main comfort with this "sun's perpendicular heat" over one's head. Received letters from London, and sent replies thereto. Fine city this—an awful lot of Jews herein! bought a map, a blouse, six peaches for two pence (English), and some Leipsic plays. Young, I find, is studying German, and Yates getting it out of Young at second-hand—so it will be a nice hash at last.

*August 1.*—Started for *Darmstadt*, and dined there—by Jove this is a beautiful city, small though it be. "Good digestion" being polite enough to "wait on appetite and health on both," and being pressed for time, I drove on to *Heppenheim* to sleep. Met three of the Court carriages "returning to town"—all splendid—roads good—horses and equipages only to be surpassed by those of England. Stopped at a dirty hotel (about the very dusthole of Germany, I should say) the name of which I forget, and should be particularly sorry to remember.

*August 2.*—Reached *Heidelberg* at one o'clock this day—the drive from *Heppenheim* to which city is verdant and abounding in the extreme. Previous to dinner, started off to see "the castled crag" of *Heidel-*

berg, the equal to which is scarcely to be found beneath the blue canopy. The original strength of this palace-fortress may be best accredited, by a single glance at a portion of the round tower (*Der Gesprengte Thurm*), which, after undergoing a series of bombardments, fell *en masse* into the dyke below, and there seems embedded like a distinct wing of the castle. The celebrated "Tun" is all very well for Rhenish wine, and for those who have not seen the porter vats of the great London brewers; nevertheless, it conveys a fine idea of the glories of these Palatine Lords. The guides all manifest a becoming respect for the memory of the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of James the First, of England, and grand-daughter—*ehéu ! ehéu !* of the ill-star'd Mary of Scotland, who intermarried, if I remember me aright, with Frederick the Fifth, whilome the Lord of this domain, and afterwards King of Bohemia. In the room over the gateway her portrait, engravings, and coins, cut a very conspicuous figure, as doth her own *effigies*—(and that of her husband) "on the outer wall." The suite of dining rooms, saloons, retiring and sleeping rooms, numerous kitchens, lofty cellars, deep cells, and dreary dungeons, impart a notion of grandeur, liberality, and power, with which few similar edifices inspire you—but as my *conducteur* said, with a tone worth all the rest, from its melancholy and its truth, "*alles ist ruin*"—and so it is. There is the ivy for arras, and the hoot of the owl where the clarion used to sound, and there are the scattered columns, and the crumbling stones,

and the roofless walls, and hollow casements—"and that." The chapel is least in decay—was in actual use about one hundred years ago, and the space now allotted to show off a particle or two of the armour worn by its *quondam* owners is in partial preservation. There is one thing, however, *beyond* decay, that time itself only renders more beautiful—which is, the view from all parts of this glorious fabric, that must have conveyed to the lordly chieftain every morning he looked from the oriel of his fortress a tolerably correct notion of the vastness, and power, and splendour of his possessions. The terrace and adjacent grounds are worthy the grandeur of the building, and accord with its station and its situation. I regretted that I had not time to go to *Schwetzingen* to see the more modern display of the Grand Ducal gardens—but, after all,

"there is a power

"And magic in the ruined battlement,

"For which the palace of the present hour

"Must yield its pomp, and wait 'till ages are its dower!"

The city of *Heidelberg* is altogether a fine old place, and we were well entertained at the "King of Portugal," from whose hospitality we departed on the morrow.

*August 3.*—Stopped at *Langenbrucken* to breakfast, *en route* to *Carlsruhe*, which "seat of the Grand Duke" was breasted by half-past 4. Finding there was an opera, but no chance of a seat, I despatched a note to *Haitzinger*, their principal tenor,

(who had been under my management with the German company last year at Drury Lane,) through whose instrumentality I got well accommodated. The Grand Duchess had commanded Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*, to shew off her theatre to her relative the Crown Prince of Sweden, who sat with her in the Royal-box. If possible, the opera was executed here more beautifully than at *Franckfort*. This great work of "the great master" *must* and shall be yet done, complete, *chez nous*. The finale to the second act was worth coming the whole distance from *Cockaigne* to *Carlsruhe*, to hear.

*August 4.*—"To *Strasburg*, boy"—breakfasted at *Rastadt*, at a villainous inn in the "Place," where there is a fine old church, and a decent public monument over the pump. Reached *Strasburg* at 5, where, in due rotation, I indulged in a wash, a dress, a dinner, a walk, and a bed.

*August 5.*—Wrote to London—went to Bankers—secured places for Paris, for fear of a difficulty. Visited the Cathedral, after that the church of *St. Thomas*, for the purpose of seeing the monument of Marshal Saxe, a fine specimen of exaggerated absurdity, erected by the vanity of Louis the Fifteenth, and the genius of Pigalle. The monuments of the Count Nassau of *Saarwarden*, and his daughter, are samples of the extent to which the most outrageous and blasphemous imposition may practise on the credulity of mankind. Went to the theatre, and was extremely disgusted by a bad repre-

sentation of *Le Pré aux Clercs*. The Cathedral is magnificent to look at, but they won't get me up the spire. The *Pâtés de foies gras* are here in perfection, and must be procured for the journey to Paris: though one eats and buys, and buys and eats, there is something after all excessively revolting in this torture of one part of creation ("geese, villain") merely to pamper the appetite of the other. Nice prospect of some three hundred miles, with French horses over French roads—shall be in Paris on the 8th, and so good night until then.

Previous to my leaving London, Mr. Charles Kemble had returned from America; and it became desirable on every account that an engagement should be effected with him. We had two interviews before my departure, at the last of which it was agreed, that I should make a proposal to him by letter, after having duly weighed the matter in my mind. I did so, as these letters will explain:

" London, August 1, 1834.

" MY DEAR SIR,

" Your offer for an engagement of thirty nights, before Christmas, is so far beneath what I have been offered elsewhere, and so much below my expectation, that I feel myself under the necessity of declining it.

" Your's

" My Dear Sir,

" To A. Bunn, Esq.

" Very truly,

" &c. &c. &c."

" C. KEMBLE."

“ Paris, August 26, 1834.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ I much regret that you do not accept my offer,  
 “ which, after your expressed desire to aid the inte-  
 “ rests of the theatre you partly own, I was in hopes  
 “ you would have done.

“ When I consider the present state of dramatic  
 “ affairs in our country, the manager must be des-  
 “ perate who gives more, nor can I think any theatre  
 “ capable of affording more, than 30%. for three  
 “ nights per week, with the chance of doubling it by  
 “ playing six nights—which I offered.

“ I can, therefore, only hope, under existing cir-  
 “ cumstances, you will not oppose your tenant\* by  
 “ playing in any other London theatre than his.

“ Your’s

“ My Dear Sir,

“ To C. Kemble, Esq.

“ Very truly,

“ &c. &c. &c.”

“ A. BUNN.”

“ P. S.—Your letter having been sent back to  
 “ London by Galignani before I reached Paris, has  
 “ only just been forwarded to me.”

When Mr. Kemble quitted Covent Garden theatre,  
 he was, I believe, in the receipt of a weekly salary of

\* In the following March I made Mr. Kemble an increased offer to play at Drury Lane; but he declined to play in *that* theatre, though its interests were amalgamated with those of his own, and engaged in the ensuing June at the Haymarket!

30*l.*, given him by himself as the manager ; and I could therefore see no reason, nor can I at the present moment, why 30*l.* for three nights, and 60*l.* if he played six nights, should be “so much below his expectation”—but such appears to have been the case. I had long set my mind upon the production of Lord Byron’s extraordinary drama of *Manfred*, and no one could have personated its principal character in any way to be compared to him. Our subsequent treaty was on the eve of completion, and this play in its adapted state was forwarded to him to Paris ; but our “first lord of the treasury,” Captain Polhill, deemed Mr. Kemble’s terms preposterous, and the negotiation was given up. Having completed all the arrangements that could then be adjusted in Paris, I returned home for a few days—occupied them in laying down plans for the opening, and then started back to see the new ballet of *La Tempête*, a night rehearsal of which I had already seen, that promised well. A week’s further sojourn amongst this cursed set of coxcombs enabled me finally to start off for the pleasantest and happiest part of the globe that I have hitherto traversed.

A serious discussion was now entered upon, as to the propriety and necessity of reducing the prices. I will preludise, by subjoining, as a matter of curiosity, as well as for the guidance of those who like to make calculations upon such subjects, the prices of admission to all the principal theatres of Paris, the most



theatrical city extant. It should be borne in mind that the four first have a large *subvention* from the Government :

PRIX DES PLACES À TOUS LES THÉÂTRES.

Désignation des Places.	Opéra.	Français.	Opéra Com.	Italiens.	Odéon.	Th. Nautique.	Gymnase.	Vaudeville.	Variétés.	Pal. Royal.	P. St. Martin.	Gaité.	Ambigu. Com.	Franconi.
	f. c.	f. c.	f. c.	f. c.	f. c.	f. c.	f. c.	f. c.	f. c.	f. c.	f. c.	f. c.	f. c.	f. c.
Balcon. ....	7 50	6 60	6 50	10 ..	5 ..	6 ..	5 ..	5 ..	5 ..	5 ..	4 50	2 50	2 ..	3 ..
Avant Scène ....	9 ..	6 60	6 50	10 0	....	....	5 ..	5 ..	5 ..	5 ..	4 50	3 50	4 ..	4 ..
Stalles .....	7 50	....	6 50	10 0	4 ..	....	5 ..	5 ..	5 ..	4 ..	3 ..	3 ..	3 50	5 ..
Log de Il. Gal. .	6 ..	6 60	6 50	....	....	....	5 ..	....	5 ..	4 ..	3 ..	2 50	....	....
1 <sup>res</sup> . loges. ....	9 ..	6 60	6 50	10 0	5 ..	5 ..	5 ..	4 50	4 ..	2 50	5 ..	5 ..	3 ..	3 50
1 <sup>res</sup> . grillées ....	....	6 60	....	....	....	....	....	4 50	....	....	4 50	4 ..	4 ..	4 ..
Stalles d'amph. .	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	5 ..	....	....	....
Orchestra. ....	7 50	5 ..	5 ..	7 50	3 ..	....	4 ..	4 ..	4 ..	2 50	2 50	2 50	2 ..	....
Rez de Chauss. .	9 ..	6 60	5 ..	10 0	3 ..	4 ..	4 ..	4 ..	5 ..	2 50	1 50	3 ..	5 ..	....
Baignoires .....	6 ..	6 60	5 50	7 50	3 ..	....	4 ..	4 ..	4 ..	2 50	2 75	2 50	3 ..	....
2 <sup>es</sup> . loges grill. .	....	....	4 ..	....	3 ..	....	3 ..	....	....	....	....	2 ..	4 ..	....
2 <sup>me</sup> . de face....	7 50	....	4 ..	10 ..	....	2 50	....	4 ..	5 ..	....	4 ..	....	....	3 ..
2 <sup>me</sup> . de côté....	5 ..	3 50	3 50	7 50	....	1 50	2 50	3 ..	4 ..	....	2 ..	80	2 ..	....
1 <sup>re</sup> . galerie.....	....	4 50	5 ..	....	2 50	3 ..	3 50	4 ..	4 ..	3 ..	2 50	2 ..	2 ..	2 50
3 <sup>me</sup> . de face....	5 ..	2 60	....	6 ..	1 75	1 25	2 25	1 50	....	2 ..	2 ..	....	....	....
3 <sup>me</sup> . de côté....	4 50	2 60	....	5 ..	1 75	....	2 25	2 ..	2 50	....	....	....	....	....
2 <sup>me</sup> . galerie ....	6 ..	1 50	2 20	....	2 ..	1 50	2 25	4 ..	2 ..	1 50	1 ..	1 50	1 50	1 80
4 <sup>mes</sup> . loges.....	3 50	....	....	4 ..	1 75	....	....	1 50	....	....	1 50	....	....	....
3 <sup>me</sup> . galerie.....	....	....	....	....	1 25	1 ..	....	....	1 25	....	1 ..	....	1 ..	1 25
Parterre .....	3 60	2 20	2 20	3 60	1 50	2 ..	2 ..	2 ..	2 ..	1 25	1 50	1 25	1 50	1 25
4 <sup>me</sup> . galerie ....	2 50	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	50	....
Amphithéâtre ..	2 50	....	....	1 ..	1 ..	....	....	1 ..	1 25	....	50	50	....	60

These are the prices in a city, as I have before observed, of downright play-goers, where the manager is aided by the state, and labour and *matériel* singularly cheap. The case with us is different.

My opinion had long been formed on the responsibility of any change, and I have never altered it however I may have been compelled by circumstances, beyond my own control, to concede to that of others; and it being in this instance a favourite theme with the party who found the money, and virtually was to reap any benefit arising from the speculation, there was no remedy, and the reduction\* was immediately made known to the public, after this fashion :—

“ THEATRES ROYAL,  
“ DRURY LANE AND COVENT GARDEN.

“ September 26th, 1834.

“ It having been suggested to the Lessee of the  
“ National Theatres, that some reduction in the price

\* The following sensible remarks were contained in a letter received by me from that competent judge, the late Mr. Henry Harris, in reply to the account I had sent him of the result of our deliberations:

“ The most moderate retirement is far, far preferable to an endurance of the scene of *hot water*, which a MANY-HEADED THEATRICAL MANAGEMENT is sure to create. The meeting at D. L. was a sufficient example of this. Oh, the nonsense that was talked! “ ’Twas melancholy to hear men, in other matters most talented, so wofully IGNORANT of all that concerned the theatre. How deplorable that such time should be wasted, in devising ways of SHUTTING OUT, instead of BRINGING IN the *needful*. Although it was proved by COCKER (and figures are stubborn things) that it will require 420 people in the boxes at the new prices of 5s. to bring the ~~same~~ cash in, as 300 at the old, and, *ergo*, that a 400*l.* house would be but 280*l.*: yet in spite of this and of all that could be urged by those who from their ways of life were best able to judge, still P—

“ of admission to the boxes would be acceptable to  
 “ the public, he has adopted it in the circles above  
 “ the dress ; at the same time, he begs leave respect-  
 “ fully to state, that the continuance of this reduced  
 “ scale of admission will depend entirely on an increase  
 “ of patronage from the public.

“ The prices of admission, therefore, will be, Dress  
 “ Circle, first price 7*s.*, second price, 3*s.* 6*d.* ; Upper  
 “ Circles, first price, 5*s.*, second price, 3*s.* ; Pit, first  
 “ price, 3*s.* 6*d.*, second price, 2*s.* ; Lower Gallery,  
 “ 2*s.*, second price, 1*s.* ; Upper Gallery, 1*s.*, second  
 “ price, 6*d.*

“ The stalls will also be reduced to 7*s.*

“ The entrance to the Dress Circle at Covent Gar-  
 “ den will be exclusively from Bow-street, formerly  
 “ appropriated to the admission of tickets.—At Drury  
 “ Lane from the right of the Rotunda in Brydges-  
 “ street.

“ The Free Admission entrance at Covent Garden  
 “ is removed to Bow-street.”

In the letter just quoted, Mr. Harris *did* prove a prophet, for the attempt was the undoubted cause of a serious loss to the exchequer. His sentiments therein were so in unison with my own, that I am tempted to subjoin a few additional observations by him on the subject.

“ and Co. seemed impenetrable, and resolved to try the rash experi-  
 “ ment. I am sorry for HIM, for YOU, and for US ALL, as it MUST  
 “ fail, for no one can foresee the fatal consequences. Hoping that  
 “ for this once I may not prove a *Cassandra*, believe me, &c.”

“ The FATAL step of *lowering the prices* was in itself enough to put an extinguisher on all FASHION. “ Who buys cheap and stinking fish? And who “ wanted any additional PROOF, that when there is an “ attraction in theatres, they will come without regard “ to the PRICES, and when there is none, they will not “ come at any price.”—(Extract from a letter dated “ Rosehill,” where Mr. Harris then lived, “ October “ 18, 1834.)” I restored the old prices at Christmas under circumstances that have to be explained presently.

The utmost attention was now paid to the preparation of *Manfred*, which the noble author had stated, in print, “ He had rendered quite impossible for the stage.” A novice to the London boards—at least of the patent theatres—having made a tolerable stand in *Shylock*, was selected for the representative of the hero.\* The genius of those excellent artists, and as excellent gentlemen, the Messrs. Grieve, was applied to its scenic illustration, and that of Mr. Bishop to the composition of the necessary music.†

\* Mr. Denvil subsequently made a signal and irretrievable failure in *Othello*—thereby verifying the rather odd remark made to me by an Irishman, some years since messenger to Drury Lane theatre : “ By my soul, sir, whenever these young stagers get into the clutches of Shakspeare, they’re found out directly.”

† A rival composer, who heard this music the first night, observed to a friend by his side, “ This Bishop is enough to set one to sleep,” and the bystander so addressed, replied, “ Why Bishop is a *composer* “ you know.” Be it so or not in this instance, his genius has kept awake, and enchanted, thousands and tens of thousands, for many a long year.

In this, as in the instance of *Sardanapalus*, I derived considerable assistance from my friend Mr. Murray,\* of Albemarle-street, to whose urbanity the managers of the London stage may always appeal, and when they have appealed, have always been indebted for any aid in his power to render.

Certain it is, that by favoring us with little plot, little action, and few characters, the noble poet did his utmost to render his progeny unfit for representation ; but the vast contribution of the "marvellous" and the "improbable," with which the work abounds, made up for the deficiency. It was eminently successful—applauded by a crammed auditory, lauded, with but one exception, by the press, and witnessed with an inward satisfaction and delight by the poet's sister, the Honourable Mrs. Leigh. In a letter from this accomplished lady, she says, "Manfred was splendidly got up, and Miss Ellen Tree's *Witch of the Alps* I shall dream of!" That personation was indeed something to remember, and, what is more, something never to forget.

The exception, amongst the newspapers, to which

\* Mr. Murray is the sayer, as well as the receiver and giver of good things. Having obliged me with his company to dinner, to meet Mr. Forrest, the American tragedian, and happening to fancy some hock on the table, he very demurely said to me, "Bunn, if you have any quantity of this wine I'll tell you the best thing to do with it." To which I, imagining he was about to propose a particular plan for its better preservation, simply inquired, "What?" "Why take it," said he, "out of your wine cellar and put it into your book-seller."

I have alluded, was, *The Morning Chronicle*, which belaboured the production of *Manfred* (as it had done all the preceding efforts of the season) unmercifully. A mutual friend of the principal proprietor of this Journal and myself, having witnessed the performance in question, represented the case to him, and he came in person to decide on the justice, or injustice, of the critique. In this, as in every instance of application, I received the fullest protection and most gentlemanly attention from Mr. Easthope.

Exclusive of any privileges extended to *The Morning Chronicle*, an extraneous one was given to a gentleman understood to be its theatrical reporter, and believed by me to be my theatrical opponent. I should not have taken any further notice of the gentleman in question, than by rescinding an unusual privilege, unusually abused (in my humble judgment), had he not favoured me with a letter, which naturally elicited a reply ; and lest either of them may have been misrepresented, I here give them :

“ 25, Euston-square, Nov. 11, 1834.

“ SIR,

“ I was not aware until I returned to town, that  
“ any difference had arisen between you and the  
“ *Morning Chronicle* on the subject of the critique  
“ upon *Manfred*, which was written by a gentleman  
“ who acted for me during my absence. Had I known  
“ it I should not have run the risk of the admission  
“ I have hitherto used, and which I gave to a friend,

“ being rejected. I did not even see or hear of the  
“ critique, as I was at that time confined to my room,  
“ and did not trouble myself about theatricals.

“ I only mention this fact, in order to explain how  
“ it happened that the written ticket, signed by me,  
“ was sent in.

“ I may take this opportunity of adding, which I  
“ do in perfect sincerity, that I have no wish to  
“ hurt your property ; on the contrary, it has been my  
“ desire and intention to support your interest as far  
“ as I could do so with propriety. My instructions  
“ to my deputy, while I was at Brighton, were entirely  
“ consistent with this view, though he seems in this  
“ instance to have been actuated by a zeal which  
“ produced ‘ a rigour beyond the law.’

“ I am, Sir,

“ Your very obedient humble servant.

“ To

“ J. P. COLLIER.”

“ A. Bunn, Esq.

“ &c. &c. &c.”

“ Princes Place, Nov. 15, 1834.

“ SIR,

“ My complaint to the Proprietor of the *Morning*  
“ *Chronicle* did not refer to *Manfred* alone, but to  
“ the tissue of falsehood and nonsense which has  
“ appeared about *Cinderella*, and other pieces from  
“ time to time in that paper, and which has rendered  
“ it, in that particular department, the ridicule of  
“ all its readers.

“ It is not for me to enquire into the reason why  
 “ you *have*, or have *not*, ‘troubled yourself about  
 “ ‘theatricals’ (to use your own language), but as your  
 “ privilege was granted you at the request of the  
 “ editor, as the avowed critic of the *Morning*  
 “ *Chronicle*, it has been taken away owing to the  
 “ unmeaning abuse of the best ends of criticism, no  
 “ matter to whom such abuse has been entrusted  
 “ or by whom it has been committed.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Your very obedient humble servant,

“ To

“ A. BUNN.”

“ J. P. Collier, Esq., &c., &c., &c.”

I have never once doubted the honest intentions of this gentleman’s criticisms; but without intending the slightest disrespect, I very much doubt both their soundness and their utility.

While matters had been in active progress at one house, various contributions were made for the effective support of the other: and although, from previous engagements, I was unable to avail myself of the following offer, I cannot deny myself the pleasure of presenting the reader with a copy of the humorous style in which it was conveyed:



# The Stage.

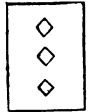
MY DEAR SIR,

To think ? or not to think ?  
That is the question ! Be it so—  
Then I !!!

do think . . . . .

that I can do *summut* in

Perhaps a sing-song affair in



or a "tiny bit of playfulness," which the kids like to laugh at, th



time of the Weather Sheet,



But should the



be *cudgelled*, the paper stained ! a

"airy nothing" procure a local habitation and a name



will the

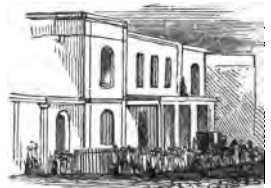


in Theatricals play either  
of them at

I remain, my dear Sir,

Your's, truly,

PIERCE EGAN.




Hope deferred !  
MSS. the shelf !



Rejection !! call again  
to-morrow, &c. !!!!!



\*\* No **LUCK** ! no  will be look

for ! but should winning be the result, why the


the *sweetener*  either at the *Blue*

Magazine, or the *Treasury*, not being "partikle

to a shade," d'ye see, *where* it comes from

Some Coves, it is said, are only to be *tempte*

by a sop in the  but my taste is mor

No go ! inclined for the gift of  Esq.

Pay

Poor Pierce ! I really wish him all the good his varied talent deserves. They say, that Fortune knocks at every man's door once in his life-time ; but if she ever did at Egan's, I am very much afraid he was not at home.

## CHAPTER XI.

Dissolution—Difference between a capital fellow and a fellow of capital—Mr. Stanfield and Mr. Ducrow—Family sorrows—Mr. Farren and a distinguished nobleman—Additional verses to a popular song—Death and drunkenness—Sir Robert Peel and the Patent Theatres—A distinction between *ways* and *means*—Mr. Poole and the horn-blower—Death of Mathews—Italian *airs*—Laporte's opinion of them in a letter—Bunn's opinion of them in a song—Malibran's engagement—Unprecedented terms—One man found to refuse what all the rest of mankind were trying to possess—A droll and a deep letter from Malibran—Extraordinary interference of the Lord Chamberlain—Killigrew's Patent—George the Third's Patent, and the fees paid for it—Charles Kemble's opinion of the Lord Chamberlain's powers—A surviving regicide—Deaths of Bellini, and Isaac Pocock, &c.

ALTHOUGH it is absolutely necessary to enter into the fact of the dissolution of the UNION, which terminated with the present season, it is not important to go into the minutiae. Notwithstanding, at the onset of its proceedings, my secrecy as to the exact nature of OUR CONSTITUTION was stipulated for, and religiously observed, it was not so strictly maintained by others, who were acquainted with its formation. Between

the one who found all the money and the one who was invested with all the authority, many persons sought to draw a line of distinction, and naturally to produce a difference of opinion not amounting to a matter of much moment, but enough to disturb in some slight degree the harmony of affairs. Our respective positions had been very clearly laid down in a deed, bearing date the 24th of April (1834), and had been duly acted up to—but still the few “distinctions without a difference” that would be sure to arise between the impressions of a gentleman not long habituated to theatrical pursuits, and the experience of one whose life had been principally occupied with them, were likely to be exaggerated by officious and jealous people, whose object for the most part is accomplished when any mischief has been effected. The alterations of the prices had disconcerted my calculations and plans, and such a vital alteration as that seemed to me to be but the forerunner of others—petty misconceptions led to petty remarks on the part of those who did not, or would not, see the probable consequences of any breach between myself and my backer, and discord appeared to be their aim. In the midst of the slight dissensions such unworthy cavillings gave rise to, he was urged by his family and friends to disconnect himself if possible with the stage; and having possessed me of his wishes, I felt bound if possible to carry them into effect. It would be irrelevant to my purpose, and a proceeding of questionable delicacy, to fill up my book with deeds and

agreements, calculations and arrangements, plans and promises made and entered into at the time, for the due fulfilment of our respective responsibilities. It will be enough to say that on the 6th December, in this year, I took the pecuniary onus off the shoulders of my friend and transferred it to my own, which had hitherto borne the practical one. All questions of a financial nature have been long since placed in the legal hands of our respective advisers, by whom the heavy debt due to my estate has yet to be adjusted, and to the discomfiture of those who wished a contrary result, Captain Polhill and myself are on terms of our accustomed intimacy. The retirement of the capitalist from any concern, and above all others from a theatrical one, is calculated either to shake its stability or embarrass its exertions—very likely both. If I had no past liabilities to contend with, I had no current capital of consequence to go on with. I had to fight my way single-handed ; and such as it was, “alone I did it.” There were two important points now remaining to be decided : one was to see if, without the means it could thus far rely upon, it were possible to carry on the UNION ; and if not, the next was how to get rid of it—*nous verrons*.

Though the secession of “the capitalist” took place at the worst period of the whole year (the three weeks preceding Christmas), we had the prospect, on weathering that, of alighting on the best (the Christmas holidays). Following up therefore the plan of the last season, we produced a pantomime at Covent

Garden theatre, and again enlisted the eminent services of my friend Ducrow,\* for the production of an equestrian spectacle at Drury Lane theatre, under the title of *King Arthur*, and *The Knights of the Round Table*, the success of which was at least equivalent to its predecessor—it could not well go beyond it. The production of this spectacle was remarkable amongst other things, as having led to the retirement of Mr. Stanfield, the eminent artist, from the very cradle of his reputation, where he had long been “a spoiled but favourite child.” He had prepared, with great ingenuity, and at great labour, a splendid scene, representing the *Entry into the City of Carlisle*; and when it was shown at the last rehearsal, Ducrow had thronged every part of it with *knights, squires, pages, attendants*, and all sorts of characters, to give life and animation to the scene. Mr. Stanfield being of opinion that his scene had quite “life and animation” enough in it, without any of Mr. Ducrow’s assistance, vowed he would leave the theatre unless the said scene was first discovered for the audience to gaze on and admire, and the multitude sent on afterwards. As this would altogether have marred the effect of the piece, and probably have operated as a wet blanket on

\* Two silver vases, presented by his very ardent admirer in commemoration of his masterly exertions for the success of “*St. George and the Dragon*,” and “*King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table*,” are a trifling contribution to his celebrated Cabinet of Art, but are a very inadequate token of the regard I have, through a friendship of long years, entertained for Mr. Ducrow.

its termination, it was too great a risk to run, at the mere instigation of vanity ; and as I sided in opinion with Ducrow, the offended painter quitted the theatre. I very much regretted his secession, but thought, as I still think, it betrayed a littleness unworthy a great mind !

Beaten down by hard work, not being in particularly good health, or good spirits\*—wanting moreover a little leisure for the adaptation of Auber's opera of *Lestocq*, on which I had then set myself a task, and knowing that the present prosperous career of the enterprise would sanction a few days' absence, I accompanied a party, of which Ducrow formed one, to Brighton. We were not long there before an opportunity presented itself of getting up a scene of more actual amusement than any we had left behind us. Farren, in ignorance of my having left town, had made an engagement, "on the sly," for one night with the Brighton manager ; and perceiving the announcement in the play bills, we took the liberty of using the name of a nobleman not then at Brighton, and in such name wrote a letter to Farren (to ascertain if he would swallow the bait), simply asking if it

\* To prevent any misconception of this expression, it is only necessary to observe that within the few last months, I lost father, mother, and brother (a wealthy and respected magistrate and merchant at Sydney). It is Young, I believe, who thus records such affliction :—

" Insatiate Archer ! could not one suffice ?

" Thy shaft flew thrice, and thrice my peace was slain."

were compatible with his engagement to play *Tam-o-Shanter* the following evening? The comedian *did* swallow it, hook and all, as his reply will testify :

“ Brighton Theatre,

Monday, January 26, 1835.

“ Mr. W. Farren presents respects to Lord M——o, and begs to inform him that his performance *to-night* will be his only one in Brighton.”

We had now to go through the purgatory of keeping out of the way, because, as the fish had bit, there would be no fun if it was not fairly landed. Another letter was therefore despatched, regretting the shortness of his stay, and asking, as a great favour, if it *would* be possible to gratify his Lordship's party, by singing a song he had then made popular, in *Tam-o'-Shanter*, known by the title of “ *Green Grow the Rushes O !* ”—and at the same time begging that six box tickets might be sent for the advantage of the *bénéficiaire*, Miss Helen Faucit. Hooked again—back came this reply :

“ Mr. W. Farren presents respects to Lord M——o, and encloses six box tickets for to-night ; and will, if possible, sing ‘ *Green Grow the Rushes,* ’ at his Lordship's request. The only difficulty there will be to the doing so may be the want of orchestra parts, which Mr. Farren cannot at this moment tell, the leader of the band not being in the theatre.” Every man in Brighton who could scribble a note of music was put into requisition—the utmost respect manifested,



and the stage private box kept for the noble Lord and family. As we entered the house we requested one of the servants to take a note round from his Lordship to Mr. Farren, containing the money for the tickets, and a requisition from his Lordship! that Mr. Farren would be so obliging as to sing the accompanying additional verses:—

## 1.

" Green grow the rushes O,  
" Was there ever *sich* a ' go ?'  
" When Farren thought 'twas Lord M——o,  
" In walked Mister A. Ducrow !"

## 2.

" Green grow the rushes O,  
" Is vastly liked by Lord M——o,  
" But Farren better likes, you know,  
" The *rushes* to the boxes, O !"

It was put into Mr. Farren's hands, just as we entered the box opposite the entrance in which he was standing; and at the sight of his expressive face, I literally fell into a fit of laughter. The mere hoax was not the only point for Farren's consideration; for if, by any accident, he had been suddenly called upon to play that evening at Drury Lane, the little trifle of "1,000*l.* liquidated damages," for the due fulfilment of his article of engagement, would have been in an awkward predicament. The incessant volleys of laughter we kept up, even to the annoyance of the audience, convinced the absentee that *I* had no angry feelings; and being a very good-tempered

fellow, *he* exhibited none. Of course we knew our man; that is, his easy nature, though not his gullibility; for, barring the question of pounds, shillings, and pence, and his taking you by the button hole whenever he wants to convince you of an impossibility, Farren is a gentlemanly man, and a very fine actor.

Among other dilemmas, beyond his control, to which a manager is subject, are those arising from the intemperance of a performer. Poor Blanchard, a comedian of undisputed ability, and who, though he died without a sixpence, died also without a successor, was hissed off the stage on the 23rd of February for being intoxicated. On the 24th I discharged him; and on the 25th he made this appeal to me:—

“ Wednesday, Feb. 25th, 1835.

“ SIR,

“ I have to offer a most ample apology to you for the conduct you complain of, and very justly, but if you persist, I can see but ruin to me and my family. Sorry, truly sorry, should I be to have them suffer for my faults. Let this go by, *and never again shall you have reason to reproach me with a similar offence.*

“ Your’s, Sir,

“ A. Bunn, Esq.                      Most obediently,  
Great Russell-street,              W. BLANCHARD.”  
Bloomsbury.”

The curiosity of this letter lies, in his “ being truly

sorry should his family suffer for his faults," without seeming to care one fig whether the theatre suffered by them, or not. Had I been "constant *Cimber should* be banished," his family would have starved, and I been classed amongst the brute creation. In restoring him I endangered the safety of any piece he played in, and also the good will of the audience. More managerial trials—but there are plenty of others in store.

A week or two after the occurrence of the Brighton burletta, I went to Paris, and was absent nine days. The evening preceding my departure, I had been chatting with a noble fellow, in whose friendship I had long rejoiced, and on the day of my return he was a corpse—having been seized with malignant scarlet fever beyond the physician's aid. The victim of this attack was Sir Peter Parker, a post captain in the Navy, and a son worthy the father who died so undauntedly in the attack upon the American camp near Baltimore. The father was first cousin to Lord Byron, whose eulogy would equally apply to the character of the son. Who can forget, amongst other lines, these?—

There is a tear for all that die,  
A mourner o'er the humblest grave;  
But nations swell the funeral cry,  
And triumph weeps above the brave.  
And gallant Parker, thus enshrined,  
Thy life, thy fall, thy fame shall be,  
And early valour glowing find  
A model in thy memory.

Thus runs the world away: but public life can scarcely find time for private sorrow.

An opinion had long been gaining ground, with many members of the profession, and which was also entertained by the proprietors of the respective theatres, that a respectful but strong appeal to Government would lead to the grant of some allowance towards their support. I never had the remotest idea of the success of any such application. Messrs. Hume and Co. would have stopped the supplies *instantly*. It was my duty, however, to yield to the judgment of so many others, and as "there is no harm in a guinea," so there could be no harm in trying to get one. One thing was certain, that the only chance of your petition being listened to, was, to submit a plan by which the people might at all events have an equivalent quantity of fun for their money, which is not the case in any continental theatres, deriving aid from Government. The application, the memorial it contained, and the response, are herewith submitted, that the reader may judge for himself:—

" Theatre Royal Covent Garden,

" March 17th, 1833.

" Mr. Bunn, Lessee of the two National Theatres, respectfully solicits the attention of Sir Robert Peel to the accompanying Memorial.

" The only apology Mr. Bunn can offer for this intrusion on the valuable time of Sir Robert Peel, at a moment when his attention must be distracted by

other more important matters, is the acknowledged protection the arts of the country have received at his hands, and the consequent regret he is convinced Sir Robert Peel would experience at hearing that any of their temples had fallen to decay, during his enlightened administration, from too nice a sense of delicacy in withholding from Sir Robert Peel the true state of their condition."

" To

" Sir Robert Peel, Bart.,  
    &c., &c., &c..

" The Humble Memorial of Alfred Bunn, Lessee of  
    " the Theatres Royal Drury-lane and Covent Gar-  
    " den, to the Right Honourable Sir Robert Peel,  
    " His Majesty's Secretary of State, &c., &c., &c.

" Sheweth,

" That every effort which the knowledge and  
    " enterprise of the most experienced and celebrated  
    " professors of the dramatic art have used to support  
    " the national theatres, with a taste and splendour  
    " required by this vast metropolis, have for a series  
    " of years totally failed, involving the respective  
    " parties in irretrievable ruin.

" That the humble exertions of your memorialist  
    " in uniting the two patent theatres, though they  
    " have been highly approved of by the public, and  
    " have tended in a great degree to reduce the proba-  
    " bility of those frightful losses sustained by his  
    " predecessors, have nevertheless been frustrated by

“ the general want of patronage ; and as such under-  
“ taking was considered the only means of saving  
“ the two properties, those expectations have been  
“ defeated, your memorialist is reduced to the neces-  
“ sity of finally closing these national establishments.

“ That not only is the general spirit of the country  
“ essentially undramatic, but that these theatres are  
“ still further unprotected by the thorough discoun-  
“ tenance of the wealthy nobility and gentry, who  
“ in other European Kingdoms have annual private  
“ boxes in all their principal theatres.

“ That in addition to such patronage, the leading  
“ theatres of France, Italy, and Germany, receive  
“ permanent support from their respective govern-  
“ ments, and one theatre in Paris alone is given rent  
“ free to the lessee, together with an annual grant  
“ of 30,000*l*.

“ That as the only possible means of preventing  
“ the immediate closing of these buildings, and the  
“ probable ruin of hundreds, your memorialist hum-  
“ bly prays that some grant from the Treasury may  
“ be extended to their support, and to prevent such aid  
“ being cavilled at, your memorialist is prepared to  
“ point out those plans by which the public might  
“ participate in the amusements to the extent to  
“ which they thereby would thus contribute.

“ And your memorialist,

“ As in duty bound,

“ Will ever pray,

“ &c. &c. &c.”

“ Sir Robert Peel presents his compliments to  
“ Mr. Bunn, and begs leave to acknowledge the  
“ receipt of his letter of the 17th March, and its  
“ enclosure.

“ Sir Robert Peel is wholly unable to hold out to  
“ Mr. Bunn any prospect of pecuniary aid for the  
“ support of the theatres, from the public funds.

“ Downing Street,

“ March 18, 1835.”

My idea was, to place at the disposal of Government either for the *Nobility*, or *Mobility*, as many boxes and tickets as should amount, in their value, to any sum the said Government might please to grant. There are many aristocratic hangers-on upon the state, who would not be above the acceptance of a private or even a public box. There are troops of Government clerks, electioneering tools, and other parasites, to whom the occasional privilege of a few tickets to the theatre would be highly agreeable. There are few classes of respectable society to whom the boon might not be extended, and a chosen number of open nights for *οι πολλοι*, would silence the grumbling of the unwashed. Sir Robert Peel, however, thought otherwise. I have not the shadow of a doubt but he was right, and I was wrong; and as Sir Robert is a much greater and wiser man than ever I shall be, I beg to say no more upon the subject.

The production, at this period, of my friend Poole's excellent comedy of *The Patrician and the Parvenu*,

gave rise to a more humorous equivocal than is often met with in the dull routine of life, and I therefore venture to mention it. The worthy author was at that time in difficulties, as which of us has not been? A horn had to be blown at a particular moment in a particular scene, and the player in the orchestra, not exactly "suited to the action to the word," was ordered to be in attendance at the end of the last rehearsal, to settle the point. Some time afterwards, as Poole was crossing the stage, he saw, dodging about, a man more than six feet high, wrapped up in a thick, shaggy *upper-benjamin*, with his chin sunk into the envelope of a Belcher handkerchief, his hat cocked on one side, and each of his hands dipped into their respective side coat pockets. His eye at once caught the fellow's look, and his ear took alarm, at hearing him say to a diminutive and familiar little wag, the call boy, "Can you tell me if Mr. Poole is any where about here?" The author shot off like an arrow, and had nearly reached my room door, when the skirts of his coat were pulled by the call-boy, who vociferated, "Don't you be afeard, sir—it's only the feller as blows the horn, vants to know ven it's to come in." I mention this without the fear of annoying so accomplished a writer as my friend Poole, who laughed at the occurrence quite as much as any of us.

The remainder of this season (1834-35) consisted of more bustle, variety, novelty, incident, humour, satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and general excitement,



than ordinarily characterises the movements of any management. We had the engagement of Malibran, the appearance of Taglioni, and the performance of a complete Italian opera by the artistes of the King's Theatre, in addition to the united strength of the two theatres, all popping at the town with some fresh announcement, and giving the people very little chance of escaping. The scene was likewise chequered by the retirement of Miss Kelly from the public stage, and of Charles Mathews from the stage of life. The death of this gifted actor indeed "eclipsed the gaiety of *this* nation," and created a *hiatus* in the numerous circles of private society that his character and genius had so long delighted, which there is no hope of any successor being likely to fill up.\*

Imagine the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, gentle reader, having between six and seven hundred pounds in it, *on the Derby Day!* but to do that, you must

\* Those who knew this gentleman well (and I had that gratification) will be delighted with any addition to the facetiæ recently published by his accomplished biographer. I had the misfortune to tell Mathews the following piece of nonsense TWICE:—"A churchwarden, lying at the point of death, was visited by one of the parishioners, who happened to call while he was suffering under a violent attack of expectoration. When it had somewhat subsided, the visitor said, 'I am very sorry to find you still expectorate—(*expect a rate*)—' 'No, I don't,' was the reply, 'for we made one last Sunday!'" The repetition of a joke was such an unpardonable offence in the eye of Mathews, that whenever I ventured afterwards to tell him one, he would not listen to me, unless I promised him that it did not relate to A CHURCHWARDEN.

not merely imagine, but actually understand, that *La Gassa Ladra* was supported on the occasion, Thursday, June 4th, 1835, by Grisi, Ivanoff, Tamburini, Lablache, Brambilla, the Opera chorus, and the Opera band. I have been thus particular in marking down the exact day, because it has led, and will lead, to subsequent discussion, and something more than that. These eminent singers were announced to sing the following night but one (Whitsun Eve), in an Oratorio, and their conduct on the occasion had nearly been the cause of a serious riot in the theatre. Lablache never came at all—because—he was ill! Two of inferior note never came because—*they* were *ill*! while Grisi and Tamburini positively refused to sing at all, unless they could sing all the pieces attached to their names at the beginning of the evening, and consecutively, notwithstanding they were advertised to sing some pieces in the third act, to diversify the entertainment. The Oratorio of the “Seasons” was therefore interrupted by the sudden appearance of Grisi, who, in addition to her own airs, favoured the audience with two Italian ones, and then bolted out of the theatre; and as soon as Tamburini and Ivanoff had followed her example, they followed her to—a PRIVATE CONCERT! Out came the secret: if these worthy people had remained until the end of the evening they would have lost the concert in question; and at the risk therefore of offending the public, who prized, and were the means of paying them so well, they acted, as they generally do act, upon the

principle of "killing two birds with one stone." The reader can enter, no doubt, into the disappointment of an audience, who had not only to put up with these *contretemps*, but with the infliction of three apologies in one evening made by Mr. Cooper.

*La Gaxxa Ladra* was to have been repeated on the ensuing Thursday. Why it was not, the annexed letter from Monsieur Laporte will explain: a more sensible, feeling, or judicious letter, or one more illustrative of the extent to which a manager is sometimes the victim of his performers never was penned, and is especially entitled to a corner among the memorandums of a brother sufferer:

" 9th June, 1835.

" MY DEAR BUNN,

" Whatever may be your feelings at the business of Saturday, they cannot exceed my own indignation on hearing of it; and I am sincerely sorry to have involved others in those theatrical indignities which it is my provision to endure.

" I am no less sorry to have kept you at home; it arose from a mistake—my message to Séguin having been delivered wrong. I trust you will accept my apology for this mistake. As to Thursday, you cannot doubt of the sincerity of my regret in giving up an arrangement of which I was the promoter, and which I was sure would put money into our pockets; but the affair of Saturday has disgusted and frightened me. I do not feel justified in promising you and the

public that of which I have not sufficient power to command the strict completion. I can only give that which I possess—that is, all the uncertainties, caprices, difficulties, changes, and disappointments, which belong as by nature to a company of foreign performers. And as I see clearly a disposition on their part to mar our arrangements, I think it more prudent to renounce a good plan, than to bring upon myself the abuse and displeasure which a fresh disappointment might create; better to have a little less money than such a row as that of last year. In a short time I will be able to attend to business, and we may perhaps run over this affair.

Your's truly,  
P. F. LAPORTE."

I do remember me of a song which some year or two since I strung together for my friend Reynolds, who introduced it in an afterpiece of his at Drury Lane, where it was sung and encored (the Lord forgive us our innocent mirth!) "many a time and oft." There is a verse in it so extremely appropriate, *with reference to this Italian affair*, that I venture to submit it, not in the least apprehensive that any such doggrel can subject me to the charge of vanity!

Ah! what a great man King Midas was,  
His like we shall ne'er behold!  
For whatever his majesty deign'd to touch,  
That instant it turned to gold.

But oh, the times are altered quite,  
Since the days of that famous King ;  
For touch a great man with gold, and now  
He'll turn into anything !

If you fee a lawyer, he'll swear that black  
Is black, with all his might !  
But double the fee, and the chances are,  
He'll swear that black is white !

*If an opera-singer vows he 's caught  
A cold, some night in June ! !  
Prescribe him a golden DRAFT, and then  
He'll sing to a PRETTY TUNE !*

If a doctor 's called to do the best  
That human skill can do,  
He'll bleed your arm with greater zest,  
Can he *bleed* your pocket too !

If a patriot swear that he will *die*  
For his country, like a man ;  
But give him gold, and put him in place,  
He 'll *live*, as long as he can !

So yousee the times are altered quite ;  
Since the days of that famous King,  
For touch a great man with gold, and now  
He'll turn into anything.

While such miserable trickery was being practised by a detachment of foreign talent at *this* house, a different kind of system was being pursued by another foreigner at that—Covent Garden. I had entered into a perilous engagement with Madame Malibran—doubted by many—believed by few—its result apprehended by all. So many questions have arisen upon

the subject, and the contract is of itself so peculiar that I submit it to the reader. In these days it would amount to a personal insult to think of translating it :—

### MADAME MALIBRAN'S ARTICLES OF ENGAGEMENT.

“ Entre nous soussignés, d’une part, Monsieur Bunn,  
“ directeur du theatre à Covent Garden, à Londres,  
“ et d’autre part, Madame Garcia Malibran, il a été  
“ convenu ce qui suit :

“ *Ar. 1.*—Madame G. Malibran s’engage à chanter  
“ dix-neuf représentations au susdit theatre, ces re-  
“ présentations à partir du dix-huit Mai mil huit cent  
“ trente cinq jusqu’au premier Juillet suivant.

“ *Ar. 2.*—Pour ces dix-neuf représentations M.  
“ Bunn s’engage de son coté à payer à Madame  
“ Garcia Malibran la somme de deux mille trois cent  
“ soixante quinze livres sterlings, de la manière  
“ suivante :

“ *Ar. 3.*—Trois cent soixante quinze livres ster-  
“ lings, montant de trois représentations seront toujours  
“ payées par anticipation le lundi de chaque semaine,  
“ pendant la durée du présent engagement à Madame  
“ Garcia, à son domicile à Londres avant midi.

“ *Ar. 4.*—Madame G. Malibran devra prêter son  
“ nom pour une soirée à bénéfice formant une  
“ vingtième représentation, dont le produit appar-  
“ tiendra en entier à l’entreprise Madame G. Malibran,

“ renonçant d'avance à aucune rétribution pour cette  
“ vingtième représentation.

“ *Ar. 5.*—Dans le cas où une indisposition empê-  
“ cherait Madame G. Malibran de chanter, elle en  
“ avertira M. Bunn, qui après ce simple avertisse-  
“ ment devra immédiatement faire changer l'affiche  
“ du spectacle ; et pour donner une garantie de sa  
“ bonne foi, Madame Malibran consent à restituer à  
“ M. Bunn le samedi de chaque semaine cent vingt  
“ cinq livres sterlings pour chaque représentation  
“ que son indisposition personnelle aurait fait man-  
“ quer.

“ *Ar. 6.*—Mais, si pour une cause quelconque qui  
“ ne dépende pas de Madame G. Malibran les trois  
“ représentations de la semaine n'étaient pas com-  
“ plettes, elle n'auroit rien à restituer à M. Bunn.

“ *Ar. 7.*—Madame G. Malibran s'engage à chanter  
“ *La Somnambule* de Bellini, et *Le Mariage de*  
“ *Figaro*. Quant au choix des autres ouvrages qui lui  
“ seront proposés, il se fera de consentement mutuel  
“ entre Madame G. Malibran et l'entreprise, selon les  
“ convenances réciproques.

“ *Ar. 8.*—Madame G. Malibran devra se trouver  
“ à Londres le quinze Mai 1835, pour pouvoir com-  
“ mencer le dix huit du même mois.

“ *Ar. 9.*—Les costumes du théâtre seront à la  
“ charge de l'administration et au goût de Madame  
“ G. Malibran.

“ *Ar. 10.*—Avant ou pendant la durée du présent  
“ engagement Madame G. Malibran ne devra pas

“ faire usage de son talent dans aucun théâtre de  
 “ Londres ; mais elle se réserve le droit de pouvoir  
 “ chanter dans tous concerts publics, ou particuliers  
 “ comme aussi dans ceux données dans la petite salle  
 “ de l'Opera House, Haymarket ; Argyll Room,  
 “ Hanover Square, King's Room, et en général dans  
 “ tous les endroits, ou se peuvent donner des concerts.

“ *Ar. 11.*—Si les conditions sus énoncés n'étaient  
 “ pas exactement suivies, Madame G. Malibran se  
 “ réserve le droit de pouvoir rompre son traité. Dans  
 “ ce cas même, M. Bunn n'en devrait pas moins à  
 “ Madame G. Malibran cent vingt cinq livre sterlings,  
 “ pour chaque représentation qui aurait été effectuées.

“ *Ar. 12.*—La représentation consentie par Ma-  
 “ dame G. Malibran, au bénéfice de l'entreprise ne  
 “ pourra être donnée, qu'à la suite et comme comple-  
 “ ment de dix-neuf autres.

“ Fait double, et de bonne foi,

“ entre les soussignés,

“ MARIA F. GARCIA MALIBRAN.

“ A. BUNN.”

Nineteen nights, at 125*l.* each, amounts to the sum  
 of 2,375*l.*, to be paid in the space of six weeks !  
 375*l.* for only three nights in a week, payable every  
 Monday morning, IN ADVANCE ! A friend of mine was  
 one day discussing “theatricals” with another friend,  
 who observed to him, “So, the Haymarket shortly  
 “ opens, and Morris is going to do it up beautifully, I  
 “ am told.”—“He'll do it up altogether,” was the reply,



“ if he opens with Vandenhoff in *Coriolanus*.” The same was predicted of this undertaking. There were more embarrassments than one attendant upon this engagement ; for the principle of exaction laid down by the “star of the night,” was not lost sight of by others, though only twinklers by her side. Mr. Templeton, who had been in the receipt of 12*l.* per week, during the entire season, demanded for this short after-one 30*l.* per week ! He was not merely studied in the two operas she had to play in, but was tolerably well aware of the difficulty of finding another tenor that *was* so studied ; and upon the relative positions of the acting organ-player and bellows-blower, he imagined it was a sort of joint concern ; at all events that there could be no music without him—consequently *he* was the “ player,” and *I* had to *raise the wind* ! As a strict matter of justice he ought, rather than not have acted with Malibran, to have paid *me*, instead of my paying *him*. The value of her tuition, and the result of her inspiration, was worth anything to a young beginner—but my worthy warbler happened to come from the other side of the Tweed.\* Despite all these and other

\* A curious circumstance occurred between our *Elvino* and *Amina* during this engagement. Templeton came to me one evening, and, observing that Malibran had treated him in a most unbecoming and rude manner, even while on the stage, asked my advice as to the line of conduct he should pursue. I told him to call upon her, state his feelings, and ask if he had committed any offence that had incurred her displeasure, and led to such a total want of good breeding—he did so the next morning. Her reply, between an inclination to laugh and a disposition to be serious, was, “ I thought you wanted, Sir, to kiss me.” At this moment when she was the idol of the people, “ the

obstacles, not only was this engagement fulfilled to the letter, but a renewed one of seven nights more was entered into, and as strictly carried out. Her services for these additional nights were transferred to Drury Lane theatre, that neither the interests nor the reputation of one house should be upheld at the expense of the other ; and at the same time to satisfy the proprietors, and the tenants of private boxes. The sum paid for these extra seven nights was 1088*l.* 16*s.* 3*d.*, making a total of 3463*l.* 16*s.* 3*d.* for twenty-six performances. On the evening which terminated her first engagement, Madame Malibran found a case of jewels (a bracelet of rubies and diamonds, with a ring attached by a chain, and mounted in the same stones) lying on her toilet ; and on a silver tablet, let into the top, were engraven these words :

TO MADAME MALIBRAN,  
The most distinguished Artiste  
The Theatres of Europe have ever possessed,  
This trifling token of esteem is presented,  
BY ALFRED BUNN,  
Lessee of the Theatres Royal Drury Lane, and  
Covent Garden.  
London, July 1st, 1835.

Madame Malibran was a creature of so much impulse,\*

---

admired of all beholders," when peers would have given their coronets to press only the tips of her fingers, and the world at large was sighing at her feet, imagine the phlegmatic songster exclaiming " Gude God, is that all ? Mak your mind easy, I would na' kiss you for ony consideration ;" and shaking hands, he left the house.

\* Here is a letter from Malibran, in one of her very funniest of

that with all her inordinate love of money (and it would

moods, displaying the unbending of her lofty spirit to disport among the ordinary occurrences of life :—

“ It is *so long* that I have not written to you, that I am sure you *must* want to hear from *me*. I have a great mind to scold *you*—but I shall not do it, because you can repair the *gross mistake* that has been made. *First of all*, be so good as to give De Beriot's name at the door, and Bellini's, so that when they do me the honour (I mean Bellini) to come and witness my seventh appearance in the same opera of *his composition*, him and *l'other* should *not pay* at the door, as they both have *done last time*. I am sure that *you* were not aware of *this*; and now that *I have* told *you* the *fact* (which Bellini himself told me last night) I am *sure* you'll put on all your squints and smiles in a beautiful letter, addressed both to Bellini and your humble servant, and offer them a box very gracefully, besides two tickets for the pit or stalls, just as it may suit your convenience. What do you think of that? Really you *owe* me that as a reparation for the immense sum of money that he has laid forwards to see me. I mean to be very particular, since *you* are so too, with a miserable pair of stockings that I wanted, and that you most *sweetly* refused!!! Hee? What do you think of that? No excuse for to-night, for I have given my word, being sure, before hand, that Mr. Brutus Bunn, or rather Mr. *Pilato* Bunn (on account of his washing his hands at all things) would not be so ungallant as to refuse what now I beg and *command* him to do, for his most *obedient* (when he has nothing to command) *servant*, and in expectation of being obliged..... *Amina* Sir, an please you. You, as one seldom pleased, what do you think of ———



“ The favour of the *boxes* and tickets is requested, if your *immense* occupations should *prevent* the *event* of all your sweet squinting smiles and ferocious compliments, au bas de la *lettre*.”

be sheer humbug to say she had not that passion,)\* an attention of this nature was sure to enchant her. It was a costly trifle, though a mere nothing compared with what she had received from me *argent comptant* ; but she prized it as if it had been a principality just settled upon her—she hugged it as a mother would her child, or a child her doll ; she was excited beyond

\* *Ecce signum*—One—but I could furnish fifty. I received the following letter from her, dated June 18th, wishing to know the arrangement of her performances a fortnight in advance :—

“ MON CHER MONSIEUR BUNN,

“ Je viens de recevoir une lettre de personnes qui demeurent à la campagne, et qui desirent savoir si je joue *Fidelio* et *Somnambula* le *Lundi* après la semaine prochaine, et le *Mardi* aussi ; ou bien Mercredi le même opera que Lundi. J’ai dit que je croyais que nous ferions *La Somnambula* pour finir—et que la *Lundi*, 29 de Juin, seroit *Fidelio*. Ais-je bien répondu ? Du reste je leur aïs dit qui j’allois vous écrire. Je vous prie donc, de me faire une réponse *de suite*, pour que je puisse la leur transmettre, car ils desirent prendre une lûge selon le spectacle qu’on donnera. Ils desirent *surtout* savoir si je joue le *MARDI*, pour la dernière fois *Fidelio*, car ils ne peuvent pas venir et alors ils aimeroient connaître les autres jours.

“ Pardon de mon importunité,

“ To

“ MALIBRAN.”

— Bunn, Esq., &c.,  
Covent Garden.”

The reader will perceive how particularly anxious she is to know if she plays on the TUESDAY (strongly marked twice), “merely for the information of her friends in the country, *who could not come that NIGHT !*” The fact is, she had an enormous offer to sing *THAT VERY TUESDAY* at the Oxford Music Meeting, of which I had been apprized ; and *fin contre fin* was therefore the order of the day. This is but a solitary instance of the many similar tricks to which a manager is exposed—who, to be in only comparative security, should be many-eyed and many-eared too.

measure ; and, absorbed in a dream of *bijouterie*, thought no more of the public and their plaudits, and shouts, whose echoes were even then floating between the auditory and her dressing-room. Such was the nature of this extraordinary creature. The renewed engagement terminated with a supper (a splendid one, I may perhaps be allowed to call it, as, though I paid for it, I did not cook it), to which above a hundred patrons and friends of the dramatic art were invited to meet the gifted illustrator of it. Though she had played that very night, the two arduous parts in *La Sonnambula* and *Fidelio*, Madame Malibran staid at that table until the hour arrived for her to put foot into the steam-boat, and many of the guests escorted her to the Tower stairs, whence she embarked.

The energy of her character eventually destroyed this astonishing woman ; and the only wonder to me is, that the melancholy and premature event which we shall have by-and-by to record, did not take place sooner. The powerful and conflicting elements mingled in her composition were gifts indeed, but of a very fatal nature—the mind was far too great for the body, and it did not require any wonderful gift of prophecy to foresee, that in their contention the triumph would be but short, however brilliant and decisive. Themistocles, in accounting for his own watchfulness, used to say that the trophies of *Miltiades* would not let him sleep. The idea that the fame of any living *artiste* could approach her's, was enough to eat her heart away, if nothing else had ever

preyed upon it. But as there is very little room for the "*Sentimentalibus lachrymorum*," in a work of this description, the less it is indulged in, the better for all parties concerned.

It becomes necessary that the reference to the Lord Chamberlain's office and the obstacles opposed by it to the welfare of the patent theatres, particularly dwelt upon in an earlier part of this volume, should now be discussed, and the allegations set forth be borne out. The performance of *La Gassia Ladra* at Drury Lane, by the entire operatic force of the King's theatre, did not escape the vigilance of those—attorneys for the assignees of Messrs. Chambers and son ! Messrs. Mayhew and Johnston ; and notwithstanding it was a joint speculation between Monsieur Laporte and myself (and Monsieur Laporte was paying the said assignees an alarming rent for their theatre), on the result of which the former calculated upon some contribution to his heavy outgoings at the Opera House, they memorialised the Lord Chamberlain, from whose bureau this piece of "official" information was forthwith despatched :—

" Lord Chamberlain's Office,  
3rd August, 1835.

" SIR,

" The Lord Chamberlain's attention having been drawn to the circumstance of the performance of Italian operas at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, his Lordship is desirous of receiving from you an early explanation on the subject; no authority having been

granted for any entertainment of the kind at that theatre.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

T. B. MASH."

" Alfred Bunn, Esq.,

Theatre Royal Drury Lane."

To which tender inquiry the following reply was, without delay, returned :—

" Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,  
August 4th, 1835.

" MY LORD,

" Mr. Mash having addressed me a letter, stating that your Lordship is desirous of receiving some explanation respecting the performance of Italian operas at this theatre, no authority having been granted for the same, I beg to state to your Lordship that the authorities upon which every species of theatrical performance has been represented in this theatre, during my management are, ' Killigrew's Patent,' and, previous to the completion of its purchase, ' Letters patent, dated 19th June, 52nd Geo. III.,' which I conceived had been known to Mr. Mash, from the fact of his receiving an annuity of 100*l.* from the company of proprietors during its currency, and which formerly was 200*l.* (in which patents the representation of ' tragedies, comedies, plays, operas, music, scenes, and *all entertainments of the stage whatsoever,*' is expressly sanctioned) : in addition to which, I would premise to your Lordship that the

performances now in question have not only the concurrence of the Lessee of the Italian Opera House, but have been given principally for his advantage.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,

Your Lordship's obedient humble servant,

" To

A. BUNN."

The Right Honourable

The Lord Chamberlain,

&c., &c., &c."

That the reader may thoroughly understand the question now at issue between the holders of the Drury Lane patents, and the Lord Chamberlain (who in reality has nothing whatever to do with them), it is important to submit them to the said reader's perusal. They are documents that have been much talked of, and very little known, and many a page has been written upon their merits or demerits, advantages or disadvantages, by persons who never read a line of them. The first I shall submit is an exact copy of the letters patent, granted by Charles the Second to Thomas Killigrew, the original whereof is the actual document by favour of which Drury Lane sprung into life, and has continued to live :

#### COPY OF KILLIGREW'S PATENT:

" Charles the Second, by the Grace of God, King  
 " of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, Defen-  
 " der of the Faith, &c. To all whom theis present  
 " shall come, greeting: Know ye that wee of our  
 " especial grace, certain knowledge, and mere mocon



“ and upon the humble petiçon of our trustie and  
“ well-beloved Thomas Killigrew, Esquire, one of the  
“ groomes of our bedchamber, have given and granted,  
“ and by theis present, for us, our heires, and successors,  
“ doe give and grante to the said Thomas Killigrew, his  
“ heires and assignes, full power, licence and authoritie,  
“ that he, they, and every of them, by him and them-  
“ selves, and by all and every such person and persons  
“ as he or they shall depute or appointe, and his and  
“ their labourers, servant and workmen, shall and maie  
“ lawfullie, quietly and peaceably frame, erect, new  
“ build and sett up in any place within our citties of  
“ London and Westminster, or the suburbs thereof,  
“ where he or they shall finde best accommodaçon for  
“ that purpose, to be assigned and allotted out by the  
“ surveyor of our workes one theatre or playhouse,  
“ with necessarie tyreing and retyreing rooms,  
“ and other places convenient, of such extent  
“ and dimension as the said Thomas Killigrew,  
“ his heires, or assignes shall think fittinge,  
“ wherein tragedies, comedies, plays, operas, musick,  
“ scenes, and all other entertainment of the stage  
“ whatsoever, may be shewen and presented: And  
“ wee doe hereby for us, our heires and successors,  
“ graunt unto the said Thomas Killigrew, his heires  
“ and assignes, full power, licence and authoritie,  
“ from time to time to gather together, entertaine,  
“ governe, priviledge, and keep such and soe manie  
“ players and persons to exercise and act tragedies,  
“ comedies, playes, operas, and other performaçonēs

“ of the stage within the house to be built as afore-  
“ said, or within any other house where he or they  
“ can be best fitted for that purpose, within our  
“ cities of London and Westminster or the suburbs  
“ thereof, which said company shall be the servant of  
“ us and our deare consort, and shall consist of such  
“ number as the said Thomas Killigrew, his heires or  
“ assignes, shall from time to time thinke meete; and  
“ such persons to permitt and continue att and  
“ dureigne the pleasure of the said Thomas Killigrew,  
“ his heires or assignes from time to time to act  
“ playes and enterteynment of the stage of all sort  
“ *peaceably and quietly without the impeachment or*  
“ *impediment of any person or persons WHATSOEVER,*  
“ for the honest recreaçon of such as shall desire to  
“ see the same: and that it shall and maie be lawful  
“ to and for the said Thomas Killigrew, his heires  
“ and assignes, to take and receive of such our subject  
“ as shall resort to see or heare anie such playes,  
“ scenes and entertainment whatsoever, such some or  
“ somes of money as either have accustomed bin  
“ given or taken in the like kinde, or as shall be  
“ thought reasonable by him or them in regard of  
“ the greate expences of scenes, musick and such  
“ new decorations as have not been formerly used;  
“ and further, for us, our heires and successors, wee  
“ do hereby give and grant unto the said Thomas  
“ Killigrew, his heires and assignes, full power to  
“ make such allowances out of that which he shall see  
“ receive by the acting of playes and entertainment of

“ the stage as aforesaid to the actors and other persons  
“ employed in actinge, representinge or in any qualitie  
“ whatsoever about the said theatre, as he or they shall  
“ thinke fitt; and that the said companie shall be  
“ under the sole government and authorite of the  
“ said Thomas Killigrew, his heires and assignes, and  
“ all scandalous and mutinous persons from time to  
“ time by him and them to be ejected and disabled  
“ from playeing in the said theatre: And for that  
“ we are informed that divers companies of players  
“ have taken upon them to act playes publiquely in  
“ our said citties of London and Westminster, or the  
“ suburbs thereof, without any authoritie for that  
“ purpose, wee doe hereby declare our dislike of the  
“ same, and will and graunt that onely the said com-  
“ paine to be erected and sett upp by the said Thomas  
“ Killigrew, his heires and assignes by virtue of theis  
“ present, and one other companie to be erected and  
“ sett up by Sir William Davenant, knight, his  
“ heires or assignes and none other, shall from hence-  
“ forth act or represent comedies, tragedies, plaies or  
“ entertainment of the stage within our said cities of  
“ London and Westminster and the suburbs thereof,  
“ which said companie to be erected by the said  
“ William Davenant his heires or assignes shall be  
“ subject to his or their government and autho-  
“ ritie, and shall be styled the Duke of Yorke's  
“ companie; and the better to preserve amitye  
“ and correspondence betwixt the said companies,  
“ and that the one maie not encroach uppon  
“ the other by any indirect meanes, wee will

“ and ordaine that noe actor or other person  
“ imployed about either the said theatres ejected by  
“ the said Thomas Killigrew and Sir William Da-  
“ venant or either of them, or deserting his companie,  
“ shall be received by the governor of the said other  
“ companie to be employed in acting, or in any man-  
“ ner relatinge to the stage without the consent or ap-  
“ probation of the governor of the companie whereof  
“ the person so ejected or deserting was a member,  
“ signified under his hand and seale; and wee doe by  
“ theis present declare all other companie and compa-  
“ nies before mentioned to be silenced and surpressed,  
“ and for as much as many playes formerly acted doe  
“ conteine severall prophane, obscene, and scurrulous  
“ passages, and the women's part therein have byn  
“ acted by men in the habit of women, at which some  
“ have taken offence, for the preventing of these  
“ abuses for the future, wee doe hereby strictly  
“ comande and enjoyne, that from henceforthe noe  
“ new play shall be acted by either of the said com-  
“ panies conteyninge anie passages offensive to pietie  
“ and good manners, nor any old or revived play  
“ conteyninge any such offensive passages as aforesaid,  
“ untill the same shall be corrected and purged by  
“ the said masters or governours of the said respective  
“ companies from all such offensive and scandalous  
“ passages as aforesaid : And wee doe likewise permit  
“ and give leave, that all the woemen's part to be  
“ acted in either of the said two companies for the time  
“ to come may be performed by woemen soe long  
“ as their recreaçones, which by reason of the abuses

“ aforesaid were scandalous and offensive, may by  
“ such reformation be esteemed not onely harmless  
“ delight, but usefull and instructive representtions  
“ of humane life, to such of our good subject as shall  
“ resort to the same; and theis our letters patent, or  
“ the inrollment thereof shall be in all things firme,  
“ good, effectuall in the lawe, according to the true  
“ intent and meaning of the same, any thing in theis  
“ present contained, or any law, statute, ordinance,  
“ proclamacon, provision, or restricon, or any other  
“ matter, cause, or thing whatsoever to the contrary  
“ in anywise notwithstanding although express men-  
“ con of the true yearely value or certenity of the  
“ premises, or of any of them, or of any other guift  
“ or grant by us or by any of our progenitores or pre-  
“ decessors heretofore made to the said Thomas Killi-  
“ grew, and the said Sir William Davenant in theis  
“ present is not made, or any statute, ordinance, provi-  
“ sion, proclamacon, or restricon heretofore had, made,  
“ enacted, ordeyned or provided, or any other matter,  
“ cause, or thing whatsoever to the contrary therof in  
“ anywise notwithstanding. In witness whereof wee  
“ have caused theis our letters to be made patent.  
“ Witness our selfe at Westminster, the 25th day of  
“ April, in the 14th yeare of our reigne.”

“ By the King,”

(Seal.)

“ HOWARD.”

It is necessary to state, that the original document not being in the possession of the present

proprietors of Drury Lane theatre, at the opening of their new building, it was deemed essential to procure what was called a running patent, renewable every twenty-one years, the fees upon which, paid at the Lord Chamberlain's office, amounted to the sum of 185*l.* 4*s.*

As the main point of controversy is the extent of the powers given in that running document, it is proper to direct particular attention to it, whereby it is evident that the privileges granted to Killigrew were conveyed entire to his successors :

“ George the Third, by the Grace of God of the  
“ United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland,  
“ King, Defender of the Faith, &c. : To all to whom  
“ these presents shall come, greeting : Whereas, by  
“ an Act which passed in Parliament, in the 50th  
“ year of our reign, entitled ‘ An Act for rebuilding  
“ the late Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, upon the con-  
“ ditions, and under the regulations therein men-  
“ tioned, our trusty and well-beloved Samuel Whit-  
“ bread, Peter Moore, and Harvey Christian Coombe,  
“ Esqrs., are appointed trustees for the purpose  
“ therein mentioned. And whereas by another Act,  
“ which passed in Parliament in the fifty-second year  
“ of our reign, entitled ‘ An Act for altering and en-  
“ larging the powers of an Act of his present Majesty,  
“ for rebuilding the late Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,  
“ provision is made for the appointment of successors  
“ to the said trustees respectively : Now know ye,  
“ that we, for divers good causes and considerations,

“ us thereunto moving of our especial grace, certain  
“ knowledge and motion, have given and granted, and  
“ by these presents for us, our heirs and successors,  
“ do give and grant unto the said Samuel Whitbread,  
“ Peter Moore, and Harvey Christian Coombe, their  
“ successors and assigns, in trust for the Theatre  
“ Royal, Drury Lane company of proprietors, for  
“ and during the full end and term of *twenty-one*  
“ *years*, to commence from the *second day of Sep-*  
“ *tember*, in the year of our Lord Christ, *one*  
“ *thousand eight hundred and sixteen*, full power,  
“ license, and authority, to gather together, form,  
“ entertain, govern, privilege, and keep a company of  
“ comedians for our service, *to exercise and act*  
“ *tragedies, plays, operas, and other performances*  
“ *on the stage*, within a house to be built in Drury  
“ Lane, or within any other house built, or to be  
“ built, where they can best be fitted for that pur-  
“ pose, within the City of Westminster, and within  
“ the limits thereof, and within such place where we,  
“ our heirs and successors shall reside, and during  
“ such residence only such house or houses, to be built  
“ (if occasion shall require, to be assigned and  
“ allotted out by the chief officer of our works,) for a  
“ theatre or play-house, with necessary attiring, and  
“ retiring-rooms, and other places convenient, of such  
“ extent and dimensions as the said Samuel Whit-  
“ bread, Peter Moore, and Harvey Christian Coombe,  
“ their successors and assigns, shall think fitting,  
“ *wherein tragedies, comedies, plays, operas, music,*

“ *scenes, and ALL OTHER entertainments of the stage,*  
“ *whatsoever may be shown and presented,* which said  
“ company shall be our servants, and styled our royal  
“ company of comedians, and shall consist of such  
“ numbers as the said Samuel Whitbread, Peter  
“ Moore, and Harvey Christian Coombe, their suc-  
“ cessors and assigns, shall from time to time think  
“ meet ; and we do hereby, for us, our heirs and suc-  
“ cessors, grant unto the said Samuel Whitbread,  
“ Peter Moore, and Harvey Christian Coombe, their  
“ successors and assigns, full power, license, and  
“ authority to permit such persons, at and during the  
“ pleasure of the said Samuel Whitbread, Peter Moore,  
“ and Harvey Christian Coombe, their successors and  
“ assigns, from time to time to act plays and enter-  
“ tainments of the stage of all sorts, peaceably and  
“ quietly, *without the impeachment or impediment*  
“ *of any person or persons WHATSOEVER,* for the  
“ honest recreation of such as shall desire to see the  
“ same, nevertheless under the regulations hereinafter  
“ mentioned, and such others as the said Samuel  
“ Whitbread, Peter Moore, and Harvey Christian  
“ Coombe, their successors or assigns, from time to  
“ time in their discretion, shall find reasonable and  
“ necessary for our service ; and we do hereby, for us,  
“ our heirs and successors, further grant to them, the  
“ said Samuel Whitbread, Peter Moore, and Harvey  
“ Christian Coombe, their successors and assigns, as  
“ aforesaid, that it shall, and may be lawful to and  
“ for the said Samuel Whitbread, Peter Moore, and



“ Harvey Christian Coombe, their successors and  
“ assigns, to take and receive of such of our subjects  
“ as shall resort to see or hear any such *tragedies*,  
“ *plays, operas, or other entertainments* WHATSOEVER,  
“ such sum or sums of money as either have accus-  
“ tomably been given and taken in the like kind, or  
“ as shall be thought reasonable by them, in regard of  
“ the great expenses of building, hiring, and fitting  
“ up the said theatre : And further for us, our heirs,  
“ and successors, we do hereby give and grant unto  
“ the said Samuel Whitbread, Peter Moore, and  
“ Harvey Christian Coombe, their successors and as-  
“ signs, full power to make such allowances out of  
“ that which they shall so receive by the acting of  
“ tragedies, plays, operas, or other entertainments of  
“ the stage as aforesaid, to the actors and other per-  
“ sons employed in acting, representing, or in any  
“ quality whatsoever, in and about the said theatre, as  
“ the said Samuel Whitbread, Peter Moore, Harvey  
“ Christian Coombe, their successors and assigns,  
“ shall think fit ; and that the said company shall be  
“ under the sole government and authority of the said  
“ Samuel Whitbread, Peter Moore, and Harvey  
“ Christian Coombe, their successors and assigns, and  
“ all scandalous and mutinous persons shall from time  
“ to time by them be ejected and disabled from play-  
“ ing in the said theatre : And for the better attain-  
“ ing our royal purposes in this behalf, we have  
“ thought it fit hereby to declare that henceforth no  
“ representation be admitted on the stage by virtue or

“ under colour of these our letters patent, whereby the  
“ Christian religion in general, or the Church of  
“ England may in manner suffer reproach, strictly in-  
“ hibiting every degree of abuse or misrepresentation  
“ of sacred characters tending to expose religion itself,  
“ and to bring it into contempt ; and that no such  
“ character be otherwise introduced or placed in any  
“ other light than such as may enhance the just  
“ esteem of those who truly answer the end of their  
“ sacred function : we further enjoin the strictest  
“ regard to such representation as any way may  
“ concern civil policy or the constitution of our go-  
“ vernment, that these may contribute to the support  
“ of our sacred authority and the preservation of  
“ order and good government. And it being our  
“ royal will and pleasure that for the future our  
“ theatre may be instrumental to the promotion of  
“ virtue and instructive to human life : We do  
“ hereby command and enjoin that no new play, or  
“ old or revived play, be acted under the authority  
“ hereby granted, containing any passages or ex-  
“ pressions offensive to piety and to good manners,  
“ until the same be corrected and purged by the said  
“ governors from all such offensive and scandalous  
“ passages and expressions ; and these our letters pa-  
“ tent, or the enrolment, or exemplification thereof,  
“ shall be in and by all things good, firm, valid,  
“ sufficient, and effectual in the law, according to  
“ the true intent and meaning thereof, anything in  
“ these presents contained to the contrary thereof in

“ anywise notwithstanding, or any other omission,  
“ imperfection, defect, matter, cause, or thing whatso-  
“ ever, to the contrary thereof in anywise, notwith-  
“ standing. In witness whereof we have caused  
“ these our letters to be made patent. Witness our-  
“ selves at our palace at Wesminster, this nineteenth  
“ day of June, in the fifty-second year of our  
“ reign.

“ By writ of Privy Seal,

“ WILMOT.”

In the face, however of King Charles and King George into the bargain, the Lord Chamberlain returned this answer to my letter :—

“ Lord Chamberlain’s Office,

“ 7th August, 1835.

“ SIR,

“ The Lord Chamberlain has received your letter  
“ of the 4th instant, and directs me to acquaint you,  
“ that the Letters Patent granted to Messrs. Whit-  
“ bread, Moore, and Coombe, do not authorise, and  
“ were not intended to authorise, the performance  
“ of Italian operas at Drury Lane Theatre.

“ His Lordship denies that the power of Killi-  
“ grew’s patent can be extended to any other than  
“ English entertainments of the stage, and I am to  
“ add that the interpretation of it, as stated in your  
“ letter, will on no account be sanctioned.

“ As regards Mr. Laporte, the licence granted to

“ him can only be used at the King’s theatre, and  
 “ any attempt to render it available elsewhere, or any  
 “ other proceeding in contravention of the terms  
 “ of it, will be matter for the Lord Chamberlain’s  
 “ consideration, if he applies for the renewal of it for  
 “ a future season.

“ I am,

“ Sir,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ To

“ T. B. MASH.”

“ Alfred Bunn, Esq.”

These patents are something or nothing, that, I presume is, on the *Tom Thumb* doctrine, beyond dispute. The express words in Killigrew’s patent are “*to act playes and enterteynment of the stage of ALL SORT peaceably and quietly, WITHOUT IMPEACHMENT OF IMPEDIMENT of any PERSON OR PERSONS WHATSOEVER;*” and these same words form part of the twenty one years’ patent: and by virtue of these two patents every species of stage-entertainment HAD been acted in Drury Lane, until the Lord Chamberlainship of the Marquis Conyngham. If then the King, “for himself, his heirs, and successors, authorised the performance of tragedies, comedies, operas, music, scenes and ALL OTHER ENTERTAINMENTS of the stage, *whatsoever,*” by what authority did the Lord Chamberlain oppose this exercise of the Royal prerogative, whereby every species of entertainment, Italian operas included, had been repeatedly

given?\*

If the Lord Chamberlain possessed the power to abrogate the King's authority, then granting the patent was a hoax, and exacting the fees for it a robbery. This restriction of the patent rights was attempted to be enforced at the very period his Lordship signed a licence for the erection of another theatre (the St. James's), thereby inflicting a wound with a two-edged sword—one edge of it depriving you of the rights you imagined yourselves to possess, and the other licensing an additional theatre to come in for *some* portion of the *small* portion of theatrical money floating in the London market. When will this mummerly of POWER, or assumed power, cease, and when will men, however elevated, learn to know their real situation? What in the name of common sense and reason can the Lord Chamberlain have to do with such a matter as this? Various Acts of Parliament have defined the duties of this officer, though they do not sanction the construction he and his satellites are pleased to place upon them. The necessity of a censorship is beyond dispute—for “it would  
“ be a waste of time to enlarge upon the influence of  
“ stage representations over a great portion of the  
“ community, by dazzling their minds, working upon

\* Mr. Charles Kemble, now an *attaché* of the Lord Chamberlain's Office, thus delivered himself before a committee of the House of Commons, on the 18th of June, 1832: “The right of the King never was disputed, but it does seem a strange anomaly that any officer of the Crown should have the power of nullifying the King's patent!!”

“ their passions, and consequently moulding their  
 “ opinions and principles. Produce constantly before  
 “ spectators nothing but fascinating *debauchées*, and  
 “ heroic conspirators, and the weak part of the mul-  
 “ titude (which is the majority) would, in time, turn  
 “ profligates and rebels ; they would

‘ Live o’er each scene, and be what they behold.’

“ It is evident then that our theatres, with such  
 “ attributes, should be under a controlling power.”\*

But there is vast deal of difference between the use, and the abuse of authority. As a dramatic censor, the Lord Chamberlain’s appointment is a wholesome and necessary one. His Lordship’s controul over theatres in any other point of view is little else than a piece of state imposition. As I shall have in another part of my book to take up this matter, in a similar point of view, save that it more vitally affected the theatre then than it did at this time, I shall defer my further remarks. There is not a doubt that the whole might be traced to the threatened withdrawal, by the Drury Lane committee, of an annuity of 100*l.* (originally 300*l.*), soon after carried into effect—the original grant and subsequent payments of which were acts of supreme folly, to use the very mildest term. I had, however, closed the theatres, had to go to the Continent,† come back again,

\* *Observations* on the Notice of a Motion to rescind certain powers of His Majesty’s Lord Chamberlain, by George Colman, the younger.

† I was walking on the *Boulevard des Capucins* (one day during a short sojourn at this time in Paris) with Mr. Goldsmith, father of the accomplished and charming Lady Lyndhurst, when he said, “ Here

to re-open at least one of them, and consequently there was an end, *pro tempore*, to the business.

The public stock of harmless pleasure was now "impoverished" by the death of a great contributor to the Italian stage, and of a very popular one to the English stage—events that perplex the proceedings of management in no slight degree. The premature demise of Bellini was a matter of deep regret, as well as of great injury, and in both points of view especially to Drury Lane, which had the honor, if not of introducing, at all events of familiarizing, the exquisite talent of this gifted composer to an English audience. The beauties of Bellini's style were comparatively unknown, and certainly unappreciated in this country, until the performance of *La Sonnambula*, adapted to our own stage, brought them before the judgment and taste of the public. The charm which rendered their own even more talismanic than it otherwise would have been, was the execution of its melody by Madame Malibran; and connected as the reputation of composer

comes one whom you, above all others at present, ought to take a peculiar interest in contemplating. You have done extraordinary things, I hear, with GUSTAVUS the THIRD, but HE did something more extraordinary with him." I was then introduced to a man (whose *nomme de circonstance* was *Löwen*) of venerable aspect, of easy deportment, and whose figure, though bent by time, bespoke considerable dignity. He was affable, gentlemanly, and extremely intelligent. As he passed on, I naturally inquired who he was; and my feelings of astonishment and curiosity may be imagined, when I was informed, "That is Count Ribbing, the last survivor of THE REGICIDES of Sweden."

and singer was with that of Drury Lane theatre, it may not be irrelevant for its manager to record a mournful, but most singular circumstance, that Bellini and Malibran died in the very same month, on the very same day of the month, and at the very same age—the first on the 23rd September, 1835, and the last on the 23rd September, 1836, having both completed their 28th year—"so wise, so young, they say, do not live long!" It was but a few months before that he had visited this metropolis, and was a witness to the triumph achieved by Madame Malibran, in his ablest and favourite work, *La Sonnambula*; to see which, it appears by the humorous letter of the *Prima Donna*, given some pages back, he had by some accident to pay.

The other death referred to was that of Mr. Pocock, who died, exactly to a day, one month before; and finding that event thus recorded amongst my own *memoranda*, made and circulated at the time, I cannot do better than transcribe it. "The stage at any period of its existence could not afford to lose a man of so much worth and talent; but at the present moment, when it is on the verge of its decay, when nearly all its bright stars have faded away, when the nobility are forsaking, the gentry becoming sick of it, and the public at large flying away from it—the loss of one of its ornaments is doubly to be regretted. Mr. Pocock was one of the most voluminous, and at the same time most successful dramatic authors of the present times—especially in



“ pieces combining the marvellous and the humor-  
“ ous, consequently the effective—superadding to  
“ such power of composition the talent of a distin-  
“ guished artist. It was in the prosecution of this  
“ art (the pictorial), that Mr. Pocock was, it is under-  
“ stood, a pupil of Sir William Beechey, about  
“ 28 years ago ; but feeling the dramatic spark  
“ kindling within him, he since that period confined  
“ his abilities chiefly to writing for the theatres. Mr.  
“ Pocock’s first piece, as well as my memory serves,  
“ was a musical farce, entitled, ‘ *Yes or No,*’ brought  
“ out at the Haymarket in 1808, which, like most of  
“ his productions, was deservedly successful. From  
“ that period to the close of the last season he has  
“ produced on an average two pieces a year, notwith-  
“ standing a partial secession from public life, after  
“ the death of his uncle, Admiral Pocock, and his  
“ accession to the Maidenhead property. Amongst  
“ his most popular pieces may be reckoned *Hit or*  
“ *Miss, Miller and his Men, Maid and Magpie,*  
“ *Rob Roy, John of Paris, Husbands and Wives,*  
“ *The Omnibus, Cent. per Cent., Robber’s Wife,*  
“ *Ferry and Mill, Scan. Mag. King Arthur, &c.*  
“ The best evidence that can be adduced of Mr.  
“ Pocock’s respectability and station in private life is,  
“ that he was Deputy Lieutenant of the County of  
“ Berks, and one of His Majesty’s Justices of the  
“ Peace. The death of such a man, if a loss to the  
“ public, must be a still greater one to that profession

“ which was so much assisted by his abilities, and advanced in respectability by his association.”

Mr. Pocock always bore in mind the maxim handed down to us from Pliny, “ Never do anything but what deserves to be written, nor write any thing but what deserves to be read ;” and if a similar eulogy could be passed upon all of us, what an irreproachable set of people we should be.

## CHAPTER XII.

“ Repeal of the Union” carried—State of the dramatic world examined—An actor’s theory and practice at variance—His former and present salaries at greater variance—Horne Tooke’s opinion of expedition—Industrious fleas—No unanimity—Shakspeare neglected for want of actors—Demonstration of the rents of yesterday and to-day—Reduction of prices, and vitiation of taste—List of company—Macbeth’s music—Othello’s attraction—A tragedian proves his own want of it—An article of engagement—The Jew and the *Jewess*—Mr. Balfe—The Provost of Bruges—Distinction between a tuck-hunter and a tuft-hunter.

“ THE Repeal of the Union” now became a question much more discussed in the theatrical, than it is ever likely to be in the political world; and although attended with as many difficulties as the junction was first of all carried through, this bill did what the other never will—PASS. The two grand objects sought to be attained by uniting the interests of the two patent theatres were, a reasonable reduction of the exorbitant salaries that had been some time back demanded and paid, and the allotment of a particular class of entertainment to a particular theatre. To

conduct these theatres as they had been conducted so many years, required at least FOUR DISTINCT COMPANIES to each house—tragedy, comedy, opera, and ballet; and at the same time they were united, there was barely an effective one in either of these departments. The theatres must therefore either have been united, or by continuing in rivalry, with the ragged forces then at their command, have both closed prematurely, and in disgrace. For example, and there is nothing *like* example after all: the only disposable tragic force of any ability at that time to be procured, consisted of Messrs. Macready, Warde, Cooper, Miss Phillips, Mrs. Sloman, and Miss E. Tree. [Mr. Kean was no more. Mr. C. Kean had resolved upon “provincialising” until he could command 50% per night! while Mr. Charles Kemble and his daughter were in America.] If therefore this “force” (Bless the mark!) had been divided, it would have been utterly impossible to perform a tragedy unscathed by the just sibilation of a disgusted public. United, they were not much to boast of—opposed, they would have been contemptible. The comic strength consisted of Messrs. Farren, Dowton, Bartley, Blanchard, Harley, Meadows, Mrs. Glover, Mrs. Gibbs, Mrs. C. Jones, Mrs. Humby, Mrs. Fitzwilliam, and Miss Taylor. (Madame Vestris having a theatre of her own, and being suffered to play “comedies,” under the name of “burlettas,” possessed Liston, Keeley, and Mrs. Orger, while Mr. Yates, equally favoured, monopolised the Mathews. Power was in

America.) Although much better off in this branch of genius than in the preceding one, it is nonsense to assert that any of the stock comedies could have been efficiently represented with this force on the same night, at both theatres. Then, in opera, were in the market Messrs. Templeton, Wilson, H. Phillips, Duruset, Seguin, Bedford, Miss Sherriff, Miss Inverarity, Miss Betts, Miss H. Cawse, and Miss Poole. (Braham was contemplating the erection of his own theatre, while Sinclair and the Woods were in America !) All of these, but three, having been put into the first opera (*Gustavus*) brought out after the junction of the theatres had been effected, how would it have been possible to have supported, with any degree of effect, an opera at each house, had they been in a state of rivalry ? Such was the condition of the *Dramatis Personæ* when the junction was deemed advisable ; and if one of its professed objects was to reduce the salaries then considered so high, how much more essential must some such measure now be, when many of the salaries are three, four, five, and six times higher ? If 30*l.* a week to Mr. Macready, 30*l.* a week to Mr. C. Kean, 20*l.* a week to Mr. Power, 30*l.* a week to Mr. Farren, 6*l.* a week to Mr. Templeton, 15*l.* a week to Miss Ellen Tree, &c., were looked upon as exorbitant salaries (and with an exception or two they were) in what light must, at this present writing, 100*l.* for four nights be regarded to the first ;\* 50*l.*

\* In the evidence given before a select committee of the House of Commons, which I shall have frequent occasion to refer to,

a night to the second ; 120*l.* a week to the third ; 60*l.* a week to the fourth ; 30*l.* a week to the fifth, and 25*l.* a night to the latter ? Such is the fat-headedness of JOHN BULL that, if a man receive 25*l.*, a night for his services, he thinks that man *MUST* be a genius, all his faults are directly thought beauties, and the actor's *ipse dixit* becomes the auditor's authority. - Mr. Macready, for receiving 25*l.* per night, is thought a better actor (by a set of fools) than Mr. Kean was when he had 20*l.* a week, or than John Kemble when he had 36*l.* a week, as actor and manager, or than Mrs. Siddons, whose last engagement was, I believe, 1000*l.* for eighty nights, somewhere about 12*l.* per night ! ! This part of the argument we have however already gone into, though it cannot be too frequently dwelt upon. The rational reduction of the salaries was obviously one main object ; but another, and perhaps an even more important one, was the allotment of the different branches of the profession to both, instead of confining them all, as heretofore, to one theatre. My

Mr. Macready, now in the receipt of 25*l.* per night, gives this answer to question 2350, " I think that actors, being paid *by the night* in London, is particularly injurious."

" The evil that men do lives after them !"

Now, considering the attempt that has been ineffectually made to palm him off as a Shakspearian actor, in the little Haymarket theatre, his own reply to query 2340 is the best of all possible settlers of the question : " For Shakspeare's plays, I should think very few of " them can be found *which can have due effect* given to THEM IN A " SMALL theatre !"

aim was to select Covent Garden theatre for the performance of opera, ballet, and spectacle, restricting the duties of the opposite establishment to tragedy, comedy, and farce (always excepting the period of Christmas, when extravagant amusement is the order of the day). This, after all, was the grand desideratum, and "to this favour it must come at last;" if these buildings can survive another season, the shock they have so many seasons experienced. There may be, as there have been, objections to the coalition of the Patent Theatres—argued upon the principle, that the spirit of rivalry being\* disposed of, the spirit of enterprize dies along with it. But attain this one object, for the accomplishment of which I have striven so hard, and the opposition between the two theatres

\* Very likely, if it were the spirit of rivalry, honorably maintained in their times by Messrs. T. Harris and Sheridan; but the want of unanimity amongst managers is a bar to that, now-a-days. Horne Tooke was once dining with a party at the "*Bell*," in Holborn, then a fashionable *rendezvous*; and while they were in full employment and enjoyment of the wine glass, a waiter announced to them that a poor foreigner in the passage had a very clever piece of mechanism to shew the company, if they would like to see it. The man was ushered in, and displayed upon a tray a miniature carriage, of delicate construction, drawn by that not over delicate species of vermin, which the celebrated Charles Fox referred to in his memorable lines, addressed to Mrs. Montague,

"I forgive the dear creature whatever she said,

"For Ladies *will* talk of what *runs in their head*,"

fully caparisoned. Tooke watched their evolutions, with which (despite the filthiness of the idea) the whole company were astonished and pleased; and then said to the fellow, "all that this requires to be

may continue "to the crack of doom." Let the actors once know that there is but one field of action, one arena for the display of their wonderful attainments, and but one treasury to go to, for their remuneration, their tone will be wonderfully altered. If your tragedian knew that tragedy was only played at Drury Lane, and your singer that opera was the exclusive commodity of Covent Garden, he would be compelled to reduce his expectations to the necessities of their respective states. If I were asked which of these distributions of performance I would prefer undertaking, I say at once "opera, ballet, spectacle," as my various selections for years past have proved. In making this assertion, I yield to no man in my devotion to the immortal Poet; and I will prove, before I close these volumes, that I have, with limited means, *and without the latent object of exalting myself*, done at least as much to render him due homage as some unblushing quacks, who preach rather than practise. But my selection in question springs from one undisputed and indisputable reason. With all the admiration that the intellectual portion of the public has for the works of Shakspeare, they will not attend their representation unless it be of a very superior order indeed. They

perfect, is quicker action,—speed—speed—why don't you harness fleas instead." The *etrangere* shrugged up his shoulders, and despondingly exclaimed, "Ve have try de fleas, but dey vil no jump togeder." The Managers will not "jump together," or things would not have become so desperate as they are.



can read them at home, without undergoing the distraction of false emphasis, perverted meaning, and redundant action. Can the united force of all the theatres in London represent "the deathless doings" of our peerless Poet with a tithe part of the effect with which they were wont to be represented? Pooh! Then why blame a man for not doing that, which, if he did at all, he must do in a disgraceful manner? I would much rather undergo, as I *have* undergone, the charge of a set of Jack-asses for neglecting Shakspeare, than incur the charge I ought to undergo from men of mind, were I to encourage the performance of his plays by those who now-a-days commit such outrage on the stage. If destiny has doomed a man to be the manager of a theatre, it is better, and wiser, as I think, for him to devote his energies to the cultivation of that branch of the profession for the due accomplishment of which talent and means may yet be found. There are plenty of singers, plenty of dancers, plenty of clowns, and plenty of clodpoles; but where are your Shaksperian performers? The only rising "bit" of one I have seen for years is Mr. Compton, of Drury Lane theatre, who has a mind, if I mistake not, that can grapple with the mighty masters of the olden time though he can neither act *Othello*, nor *Macbeth*, nor *Richard*, nor *Hamlet*.

It was to combat this frightful state of things that the *Union* was contemplated and undertaken, and its abandonment has led to a return of it. If, as is probably the case, a conjunction of these concerns is

altogether out of the question, from the conflicting interests it involves, and the command of capital it would require—still the one great advantage to be derived therefrom, *is* to be attained. Either of the theatres may be, or soon I fear will be to be, “had on reasonable terms,” and any man, so disposed, may devote the theatre he selects to one or other of the peculiar class of entertainments herein set down, without encumbering himself with what, in such case, will be useless lumber—any *artiste* in the other branches of the art. I will give him an exemplification of this, when I come into a scrutiny of the *next* season—my present business is to get rid of *this*.

The responsibility of two stupendous concerns on the shoulders of a man without capital, the joint rental of which amounted to 16,865*l.*, with the addition of 2,000*l.* for taxes, was too great for me to continue; and it became a matter of necessity either to resign the undertaking, or to reduce its liabilities within such a reasonable compass, that they might be looked at without apprehension. The first step towards the completion of such an end was an appeal to the proprietors of the two theatres; which was met, as it invariably has been in all similar instances that have come under my knowledge, with the utmost liberality and consideration by the Drury Lane committee—with the very reverse by the Covent Garden junta. When I reflect that I sought from each but a yearly diminution of 1,500*l.*; when I see what each theatre has since been let for, and the prospect each

has of *being* let for, I confess I am lost in amazement. It would not, I should conceive, be particularly diverting to the reader, if I were to fill up the next dozen pages with the correspondence that passed between these parties and myself. The point that was aimed at, upon strict calculation, having been conceded by the Drury Lane proprietors, was expected to be obtained from the other body, which for the two seasons then expiring, had received from me nearly 17,000*l.*; and it is but common justice to the memory of that intelligent theatrical judge and upright good man, the late Mr. Henry Harris, to state, that his utmost desire was to see the concession made. But though Mr. Harris owned *seven-twelfths* of the property, Mr. Harris had but one voice in the disposal of it; that voice was out-voted, and the reduction I sought, and which they have subsequently been forced to make to others, was refused! These very gentlemen who, in ten years of their own management, PAID NO RENT AT ALL, and in two years of mine, were *paid* close upon SEVENTEEN THOUSAND POUNDS, refused their tenant a diminution of 1,500*l.*!! in a rental of 8,685*l.*!! As their tenant had no inclination to be ruined by their cupidity, he sought a release at their hands; and thinking their property, in the facetious language of Mr. George Robins, “a mine of wealth,” they granted that release, advertized *their* theatre, and left me to the management of *mine*. My favourite object was thus defeated, through my misfortune rather than any fault. I did my best to avert it; and ought to have been seconded

by those whose interests were so allied to, and linked up with my own.

Here was *destiny* again, managerial destiny—for the issue of which the only person principally blamed was the one altogether blameless. The falsehood and nonsense that obtained circulation respecting this mighty affair it is barely possible to conceive. The best thing to do in such matters is, I hope, what I did—laugh at it; but in these cases one labours under the apprehension, too often, of “laughing the wrong side of your mouth.” The divorce between the two theatres led to the onus of four companies having to be supported by ONE. The reader may naturally inquire why, having *but* ONE, I did not carry into effect my favourite idea of confining one class of entertainment *to* that one? Simply, because the principal performers in the other classes being under articles of engagement to me, followed me “whether I would or not,” to the theatre I remained in. Having thus at my command almost all the leading talent of the day, the former system of upholding the national stage, presented every possibility, one would have thought, of being crowned with success. Now comes DESTINY again! Could any reasonable man suppose that a body of people, owning the theatre in which the taste of the Kemble family had so long astonished and delighted the town, and in that body was included “the last of all the Romans,” Mr. Charles Kemble, would have so far lost sight of the reputation their property had so long enjoyed, as to

consent to its being converted from the first theatre in the world into a mere minor one? Could it be contemplated that this body, who had been offered a yearly rent of 7,165*l.* to conduct Covent Garden theatre as nearly as possible in the manner it *had* been conducted, should let it for something more *than* this, but still much less than the person making this offer *HAD* paid them, to a gentleman on the express understanding (without which *no offer* whatever would have been made) that he was at liberty to reduce the prices to those of the *Adelphi* and *Olympic*? Could the commission of such sacrilege as this have been deemed within the scope of possibility? and if *I* had attempted such an innovation, should I not, and justly, have been impaled upon the pikes of public opinion? But so it was. This splendid building was leased to Mr. Osbaldiston, and the extraordinary experiment referred to was accordingly tried by him.

The calculations which the united judgment of all the theatrical wiseheads we have ever had, would have been defeated by so unprecedented a measure, which seemed to me to partake very much of the state a man is supposed to be in, when he applies a razor to his throat, or a bullet to his brain. If this good city of London were a backbone theatrical one, no manager need be alarmed even at such an event as this. The judgment which a regular playgoer, a real lover and student of the dramatic art, possesses, will ever induce him to make a selection of that theatre where he is most likely to have his feelings gratified, his taste refined, and his

opinions confirmed and enlightened. To him it would be no matter, if one theatre were opened at *sevenpence* a head, and the other at *seven shillings*. It is not the price of the thing that would tempt men like him to put down their money. But in this untheatrical spot of earth, the reduction of prices, to the amount of nearly one half, in one of the national theatres, was an event so uncommon, that people flocked thither, for the curiosity of seeing one another in such a novel position, as will be shown.

For the effective opening of Drury Lane theatre, it may not perhaps be vain to say that, great exertions were made. The principal talent of the two theatres had, on my abandonment of one of them, been left on my hands, and with such fearful odds against me, as the reduction of prices, the battle must be desperate, as the flight inglorious. It was, therefore, obvious, that a bold game was the only one to be played. Now, reader, you shall judge how bold an one it was—exemplified, probably, better than in any other way by the subjoined *memoranda* of arrangements:—

#### IN TRAGEDY AND COMEDY.

*The Performers engaged, were:* Messrs. Macready, Vandenhoff, Cooper, Warde, Diddear, Mathews, F. Cooke, Baker, King, &c. Messrs. W. Farren, Bartley, Harley, Meadows, Brindal, Hughes, Tayleure, Chippendale, Cathie, Honnor, Fenton, &c., &c. Mesdames E. Tree, Faucit, Sloman

Yates, Glover, C. Jones, Henry, Humby, Broad, Somerville, Lee, &c.

IN OPERA.

*The Performers engaged were :* Messrs. H. Phillips, Wilson, Templeton, Giubilei, Seguin, Anderson, Bedford, Duruset, Yarnold, Henry, S. Jones, Mears, Atkins, Birt, Butler, Chant, Healey, T. Jones, Lloyd, Macarthy, Miller, F. Price, Raikes, G. Smith, S. Tett, C. Tett, Tolkien White, &c. Mesdames Sherriff, Forde, F. Healey, H. Cawse, Poole, Fitzwilliam, Newcombe, Allcroft, Boden, R. Boden, Butler, East, Connelly, Goodson, Godwin, Hughes, Mapleson, Perry, &c.

IN BALLET, SPECTACLE, AND PANTOMIME.

*The Performers engaged were:* Messrs. Gilbert, Howell, W. H. Payne, F. Mathews, Wieland, Hatton, King, Brady, Gough, Heath, J. Cooper, Kirk, Smith, Roffey, Thorne, Hartland, Jenkins, Marshall, Bennett, S. Benett, Fairbrother, Foster, Hall, Hatton, Mears, Jeans, Lydia, Marchant, Marsano, Payne, Reekie, Ryals, Sutton, Thomasin, Valancy, Vials, &c.

To this body of performers were to be added the names of the most established officers, scene painters, &c., of the day, warranting and calling forth exertions, upon a scale commensurate with their respective abilities.

Under ordinary circumstances preparations of such a nature would have silenced any common opposition, and although in the long run it did, it was under other "*extraordinary* circumstances." The opening of this season was as brilliant as the most sanguine temperament could anticipate—(mine I suppose is, or rather was such—Mathews used to call me for years, "Sanguine Bunny," "Sanguine Bunny," and he was a student of human nature!) Imagine a receipt of 360*l.* 15*s.* to *Macbeth*, and 249*l.* 8*s.* to *Hamlet*, plays in which, if the principal character was not represented as effectively as it had been on those boards, the *tout ensemble* was admirably sustained.

Now, take you a lesson on the subject of Shakspeare, of prices, of the dramatic character of the people, and other points on which so much controversy has from time to time been entertained. Covent Garden theatre opened three weeks after our operations began, with a company as totally unknown as if they had just arrived from Greenland, and when they became known they had better have gone back there. A few people, on a few pounds or shillings a week, as it might be, were called in to the support of Mr. C. Kemble, engaged on a wantonly high salary; and for the few nights he played, the people flocked in shoals, under more impressions than one, but not under one of a dramatic tendency. They were first of all seduced by the idea of going into Covent Garden theatre for four shillings—then by the idea of seeing—no matter how enacted, one of Shakspeare's plays in that theatre,



with the well-known paraphernalia of such establishment for that price—then by the idea of meeting the same society that used to be there, and which they had never before sat down with, forgetful that the difference of admission had drawn a line of distinction in the company—and influenced, above all, by the latent feeling human nature is prone to indulge in, of finding one self, no matter however fortuitously, in a sudden state of elevation. Mr. Kemble played *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* on the boards his brother John had immortalised, to the prices of a minor theatre, and before an audience in the dress boxes, the fellow to which had probably never before sat in the gallery of that classic building: and in consequence of his having so done, the receipt to our *Macbeth* fell from 360*l.* 15*s.* to 129*l.* 15*s.*; while that to *Hamlet* fell from 249*l.* 8*s.* to 99*l.* 6*s.* There are blockheads to be found who will tell you that all this manifested a strong dramatic tendency in the public mind, which, hitherto restrained for want of means and from the pressure of the times, had at last broken out in all its natural quality. Without discussing the respective merits of Messrs. Macready and Kemble, in characters that neither of them are suited for, let us examine the mode in which these pieces were submitted to the public. The other characters in the tragedy were represented as effectively as the resources of the modern stage admit of, at Drury Lane; while at Covent Garden they were filled by persons who, with a few exceptions, literally could

not understand the text. The exquisite music of *Macbeth*\* was, in some parts, nightly encored at Drury Lane, and nightly hissed at Covent Garden; inasmuch as although the singers had forgotten it, the audience had not. Is the patronage of one (to be seen disgracefully done for four shillings) and the neglect of the other (beautifully done for seven shillings) dramatic taste, or what? Will any sensible man argue that, because a mob flock to see a play of Shakspeare represented in one of his temples (where, alas! it *has* been represented to perfection) in a manner little better than it might be done in a barn, such mob is dramatically disposed? Pooh, again!

There are, however, to be found all sorts of people, with all sorts of opinions; and in case an antediluvian varlet exist, capable of differing with the rest of mankind upon this point, let me follow it up by stating the result. Previously to the opening of Covent Garden Theatre, at the reduced prices of 4s. 2s., and 1s., the week's receipt at Drury Lane had been 1427l.; and after its opening at those prices, the week's receipt fell to 814l.: but immediately on the production of the *Jewess*, the Drury Lane weekly receipt mounted up to 2381l., and Covent Garden

\* Mr. Macready went to Mr. Price, when lessee of Drury Lane theatre, ready dressed for *Macbeth*, and said, "I'm afraid we shall be very late to-night—had you not better cut out the music?" To which Mr. Price replied, "I can't very well do that, but I'll cut out the part of *Macbeth*, if you like!" I don't vouch for the truth of this, from personal knowledge, but I have Mr. Price's word for it.

Theatre became a desert. We played Shakspeare's Tragedy of *Othello*, THUS CAST (in playbill phraseology): *Brabantio*, Mr. Warde; *Othello*, Mr. Macready; *Iago*, Mr. Vandenhoff; *Cassio*, Mr. Cooper; *Roderigo*, Mr. Harley; *Desdemona*, Mrs. Yates; *Emilia*, Miss E. Tree: as much beyond the present effective force of the two patent theatres put together, as a bit of cheese is beyond a bit of chalk. The receipt to that tragedy, so enacted, was 162*l.* 6*s.* 0*d.*,\* and I have not a doubt that the receipt at Covent Garden, the same evening, was half as much again, to see *Paul Clifford*, or some such disgusting trash. Well, the receipt to the *Jewess* averaged nearly 400*l.* a night; and on its attaining this altitude, that at Covent Garden fell to nothing. Pray is this to be attributed to the dramatic taste, or the curiosity, of the town?

As this season (1835-36) was rather an eventful one for me, we may as well begin from the beginning, and as we have been extremely prosy for the last few pages, we may as well have a "wee bit" of fun. I promised the reader, some chapters back, that he should

\* This is not to be wondered at—only let the reader, after all the humbug with which he has been deluged about Mr. Macready and Shakspeare, refer to what he says himself to the Committee of the House of Commons: QUESTION 2381—"Do you not conceive, that, by limiting the performance of Shakspeare to the two great theatres, you leave it to the caprice of the proprietors of those theatres?"

ANSWER BY MR. MACREADY. "Yes; but they pay for that caprice, and the losses have been VERY HEAVY INDEED, in consequence!!!"—"I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pounds."

have a spice of Mr. Macready in "the engagement line," in order to enable him to contrast his qualities with Mr. Farren's in the same "article;" and I fulfil my promise.

"It is agreed this 21st day of September, 1835, between Alfred Bunn and William Charles Macready, That the said Alfred Bunn shall engage the said William Charles Macready as THE PRINCIPAL TRAGEDIAN at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, on a salary of thirty pounds per week, *play or no play!* for thirty weeks and a half; the payment of the said full salary of 30*l.* to commence from Thursday, October 1st, 1835, and to be continued, *without any interruption or deduction, on any pretence whatsoever*, until Saturday, March 5th, 1836, being a period of twenty-two weeks and a half (from which date, March 5th, to Monday, April 4th, 1836, the said Alfred Bunn and William Charles Macready have no claim whatever on each other): the payment of said salary of 30*l.*, free of all deduction, to be recommenced by Alfred Bunn to W. C. Macready, from April 4th, and paid to May 27th, being a period of eight weeks, making altogether thirty weeks and a half (in gross amount 915*l.* for thirty weeks and a half, in weekly payments of 30*l.*) for which Alfred Bunn has the power of requiring the services of W. C. Macready four nights in each week of this engagement.

"That W. C. Macready is to have the clear half of the total receipts of a night appropriated for his

“ benefit, which shall be the first, *without exception*,  
“ in the season, and on a Monday night !

“ That Alfred Bunn shall produce immediately  
“ after Christmas the Tragedy called the *Bridal*,  
“ altered from Beaumont and Fletcher's *Maid's*  
“ *Tragedy*, on the usual terms of 33*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* per  
“ night to the ninth night, and 100*l.* for the twentieth.

“ That W. C. Macready is to be subject to no  
“ forfeit or fine by Alfred Bunn, *under any pretence*  
“ *whatsoever*, and that he is to have the same privi-  
“ lege of orders as during his last season at Drury  
“ Lane Theatre.

“ That W. C. Macready may be required to per-  
“ form any parts in the list, given in by him, and  
“ such others as are classed in the leading tragedy,\*  
“ but not such as he, W. C. Macready, *may deem as*  
“ *partaking of* A MELO-DRAMATIC CHARACTER, and  
“ that he is to have the choice of characters on all  
“ occasions, with sufficient notice for the proper study  
“ of new parts.

“ That W. C. Macready shall not be required or  
“ asked to act the characters of *Sir Giles Overreach*,  
“ *Joseph Surface*, or *Rob Roy*, and that he is to have  
“ a dressing-room to himself, secure from removal or  
“ intrusion.

“ That in the event of W. C. Macready bein  
“ deterred by illness, or any other calamity, from  
“ appearing before the public, his salary is to be dis-

\* i.e. the very first tragic characters.

“ continued, until he shall report himself capable of  
“ resuming his duties.

“ That upon the infringement, at any time or times,  
“ of any of the above-named conditions, W. C.  
“ Macready shall have the power of giving notice  
“ that his engagement is null and void, and that the  
“ same shall be null and void upon the delivery of  
“ such notice.

“ W. C. MACREADY.”

Now mark the main conditions, reader :—

No. 1.—The said salary to be paid, without any deduction, on *any pretence whatever*, whether the theatre was burnt down, closed by a royal death, or on the usual prohibited nights, or by any visitation  
“ from plague, pestilence and famine, BATTLE and  
“ MURDER, and sudden death !”

No. 2.—The same terms demanded for a play, altered from Beaumont and Fletcher, as is given to Mr. Knowles for an entirely new tragedy.

No. 3.—The party may go out of town for a whole week, without asking permission ; and, being subject to no fine or forfeit, under any pretence whatsoever, may demand (and receive) salary during such absence, as the said W. C. Macready DID !

No. 4.—A person engages as, and stipulates to be, THE PRINCIPAL TRAGEDIAN, and yet bargains not to be called on to play such “ a principal tragic” character as *Sir Giles Overreach*, rendered formerly

so popular by Mr. John Kemble, and latterly even more so by Mr. Kean !

No. 5.—The person who has so repeatedly played *Joseph Surface* and *Rob Roy*, is never even to be asked to play them again ; and notwithstanding his style of acting is exclusively of a melo-drama nature, he is never to be required to play any parts “ HE may deem as partaking of that character !”

No. 6.—That upon any infringement, by the manager, of any of these conditions, the actor shall have the power of declaring his engagement null and void : reverse the position, and no such power is given to the manager !

The natural question arising out of a perusal of this precious document, is, why was a person making such stipulations, engaged ? He would come on no other terms ; if therefore he was not engaged, there would be an outcry upon town ! if he was, the “ out-cry ” would be, as it was, all the manager’s.

Having now shewn the reader the receipt to which “ the principal tragedian,” supported by an equally efficient force in the other characters, played in *Othello*, let us pass on to the fact, that to so low an ebb was the exchequer of Drury Lane theatre brought (despite its powerful company and successful opening) by the reduction of the prices at Covent Garden theatre (where there was scarcely any “ Company ” at all), that a temporary suspension of a portion of the salaries was essential to the continuance of the undertaking. In the first fortnight,

alone, the loss was 1548*l*. A representation of this necessity was made to the performers, and with two exceptions, was unanimously acted upon—those two exceptions were Messrs. Macready and Farren, who, while every other member of the establishment cheerfully submitted to a suspension of one third of their income, insisted upon, and received, their salaries in full. The concession of the company was, however, only acted upon one week, for directly after the success of the *Jewess* became manifest, I directed the arrear of the one third to be paid, which was thus acknowledged in a communication drawn up by Mr. Vandenhoff:

“ Theatre Royal Drury Lane.

“ The committee of actors, &c. of the T. R. D. L.  
“ feel called upon to express the gratification received  
“ from the communication made to them last night  
“ in the letter addressed by the lessee to Mr. Cooper.  
“ They tender to the lessee their congratulations on  
“ the brilliant success which enables him to suspend  
“ his claim on the assistance voted him by the performers ; and they are fully sensible of the alacrity  
“ with which he declines to draw for the present on  
“ the loan so voluntarily contributed to his aid. With  
“ best wishes for the continuance of that prosperity  
“ which may render further assistance to the treasury  
“ unnecessary, they are convinced that the promptness  
“ with which the lessee has acted on the present  
“ occasion will be felt and acknowledged by all—  
“ and that should circumstances unfortunately re-



“ quire it, the assistance of the performers to support  
“ the general interests of the theatre may be relied  
“ on with confidence.

“ Theatre Royal Drury Lane.

“ Nov. 21, 1835.”

“ To

“ J. Cooper, Esq., &c. &c.”

This little document speaks very well for the performers, and not worse I hope for their manager. But let us “ hark back” to the consideration of an argument, previously taken up, and fully borne out, by the singular success of “ *The Jewess*.”

I had this season the pleasure of introducing to an English public, a young man of great musical attainments, which, I conceived, were not destined “ to blush  
“ unseen, and waste their sweets upon the desert air,” and I was determined at all events to test *my own* opinion by that of the public. Mr. Balfe, when I was stage-manager of Drury Lane theatre in 1823, was a humble member of the orchestra—“ in coarse  
“ and homely phraseology,” a fiddler ; and when introduced to me in the summer of 1835, his name and his fame (then become entirely continental) were new to me. The beauties of the first work he was desirous of bringing out were admitted, by many able judges of music, and strenuously impressed upon me by the recommendation of Mr. Cooke (Tom, for fear of a mistake). *The Siege of Rochelle* was accordingly produced, and its success verified every judgment

that had been delivered upon its merits—though not calculated in itself to prove highly attractive, it had the good fortune to become linked, in representation, with the *Jewess*, and thus “*ran*” 70 nights the first season. It became the fashion, as it invariably does in this country, to abuse a man the moment his abilities begin to denote a mental superiority over those he is surrounded by. In France, Italy, and Germany, every species of encouragement is held out to a rising genius; in England, he is subject to every possible detraction, and the moment Balfe’s talent burst out upon the town, it was assailed by the most unwarrantable attacks. Persons calling themselves musical judges were loud in their assertions that every note of *The Siege of Rochelle* was stolen from Ricci’s opera of *Clara di Rosenberg*—and it was not until this last named composition was produced by the Italian Buffo company, under the spirited direction of Mr. Mitchell, that these self-constituted judges tardily and reluctantly admitted there were not half-a-dozen bars in the two operas that bore the slightest resemblance to each other. Mr. Balfe’s reputation could afford these assaults; he is gifted with extraordinary talents, and if ever I have had occasion to “maintain a point” with the MAN, I have never for a moment denied the eminent abilities of the COMPOSER. I like him, however, in either capacity, and speak of him accordingly—but to the argument.

‘ If the principle I have been advocating, and still

hope to see effected by some one or other, had this year been the ruling one at Drury Lane theatre—that is to say, if the performances had been confined to opera, ballet, spectacle, the profit would have been enormous; but the treasury having to sustain the burthen of a tragic and comic company into the bargain, all exertion was but labour in vain. For thirteen successive weeks (devoted to the *Siege of Rochelle* and the *Jewess*), a body of performers (totally unconnected with the performance of either, and who could not by possibility be connected with any piece of a similar character) whose united weekly salaries amounted to 226*l.*, never once crossed the stage. Here was a sum, exceeding 3,000*l.* in amount, literally thrown *hors de la fenêtre*. Up to the last night of Mr. Macready's performing here, this season, he played but 38 nights, and he received 760*l.*, which is an average of 20*l.* per night, if calculated at that rate. It may be asked, why he, who was receiving so large a salary, was not more frequently employed? The reader has been told what was the general nature of the receipt to his performances in the plays of Shakspeare—ruinous enough. He was solicited to play *Eleazar*, the Jew, (a very fine part, and one that mainly contributed to whatever metropolitan reputation Mr. Vandenhoff enjoys), and he refused to do so! After the “run” of the *Jewess* (in which he had refused to play), Mr. Lovell's new tragedy, entitled *The Provost of Bruges*, was produced, the first eight nights of which realize

an average receipt of 159*l.*, out of which the author was entitled to the not unreasonable sum of 20*l.*\* Ruinous again ! If a performer, having the power, will refuse to play in pieces calculated to bring money, and only consent to play in such as keep it out of the house, the first loss (of paying a high salary for nothing), is by far the least. The same may be said of Mr. Farren, who this season played but 51 nights, and received 945*l.*, for so doing, making an average of nearly 19*l.*

\* To prevent misrepresentation, or the charge of wilful, or, as far as possible, any mistake, the subjoined letter is here introduced :—

“ Elstree, Sept. 24, 1835.

“ MY DEAR BUNN,

“ By this mid-day's post I have received an answer from the author of *The Provost of Bruges*, and I am by him authorised to say that, although he had ‘expected the terms established by usage, and enjoyed by his predecessors and contemporaries, yet he will not let you suppose him a very rigid stickler for ancient rights.’ I am further deputed to submit the following arrangement to you which he will be content to accept, hoping that you will give all the assistance in your power to his play: viz. 20*l.* *per night* for the first fifteen *nights* (instead of the customary nine)—50*l.* additional if it reaches the *twentieth night*, and another 20*l.* if it should reach the *twenty-fifth*. This appears to be a fair proposal, and I give it to your consideration, as I received it. I think I shall be in town on Saturday, in which case I will call at the theatre for the chance of seeing you; but in the mean time send me an answer to this, which I *may transmit*, as an understanding *between you to the author*. I have read *Marino*. I fear we shall find the *quantity* of words overweigh us.—*Mais, nous verrons*.

Your's ever,

W. C. MACREADY.”

“ To

A. Bunn, Esq., &c., &c., &c.”

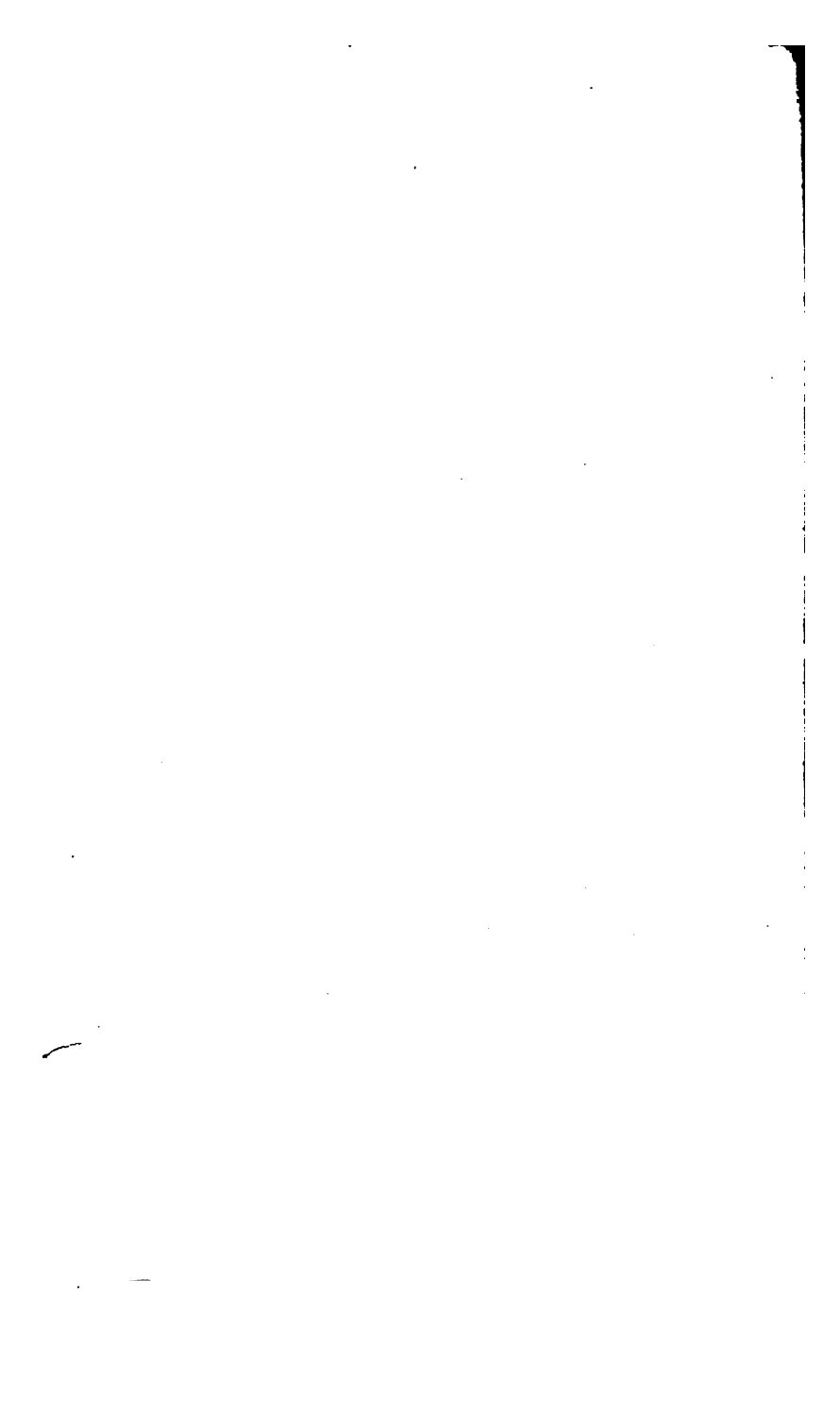
a night. What is the consequence in all such cases? Not only has the manager to provide all this mass of money, but to submit to the eternal complaint of those who receive it—because, if you **WORK** a **PERFORMER**, *id est* play him perpetually, he grumbles at what he *has* to do; and if you do *not* “work him,” he grumbles at having **NOTHING** to do!

There is an anecdote in circulation of a dabbler in periodical literature being compelled (much against his inclination) to attend church; he was pretty decorous during prayers—but on the parson ascending the pulpit, and delivering for his text, “And a certain “great man gave a dinner,” the said writer, unable to contain himself, rose up and eagerly exclaimed, “**NAME**—*name him*,”—proving that, although there is a discretion in a *tuft*-hunter, nothing can stop the mouth of a *tuck*-hunter. So it is with the gentlemen I have been referring to—nothing on earth can stop the mouth of an actor.

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY T. BRETTELL, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET.



## ERRATA.

---

### VOL. I.

Page 20, first line of note, *for* 1824 *read* 1821.

.. 28, line 1, *for* caused *read* has caused.

.. *ib.* first line of note, *for* belonged *read* belongs.

.. 59, line 15, *for* let 'm *read* let 'em.

.. 123, .. 3, *for* reader readily *read* reader will readily.

.. 129, .. 4, *rule after* ah, ha!

.. 176, .. penult. *for* part *read* hash.

.. 185, .. 6, *for* in *read* on.

